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# the net contents

**5** **welcome to *netPOWER!***
Learn how to use our CD-ROM. This month, users of the disc find mirrors of our "A"-rated Web sites, plus loads of utilities, Web authoring tools, helper apps, games, and more.

**6** **letters**
What are people saying about us? Look here to find out.

**12** **opinions**
**Stevan Alburty** investigates the hazards and benefits of employers installing Netscape on their workers' computers.
**David Sobel** worries that new legislation will mean that the FBI will expand its electronic surveillance of individuals.
**St. Jude**, in tribute to Valentine's Day, wonders whether or not a new CD-ROM "flight simulator for sex" game may be a satire on what guys are supposed to want.

**17** **news**
The latest and greatest on the companies, technologies, products, toys, deals, and alliances that will enhance and/or impede your online experience.

**24** **reviews**
Sitings, software, and books.

**66** **how to**
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Use Real-Time, Multi-Party Video Conferencing
Find AIDS/HIV Resources Online
Buy the Right Car Online
Beginner's Page: Optimize Your Life!
netFAQ

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Divided by region of the U.S., our Internet directory helps you get in touch with your community resources. And, if the practical stuff doesn't excite you, check out our guide to investment sites, games, e-zines, and beer-related information.

**90** **peripherali**
Toys and tools that all good boys and girls deserve.

**92** **humor**
Off the Wire
Bizarre Site o' the Month
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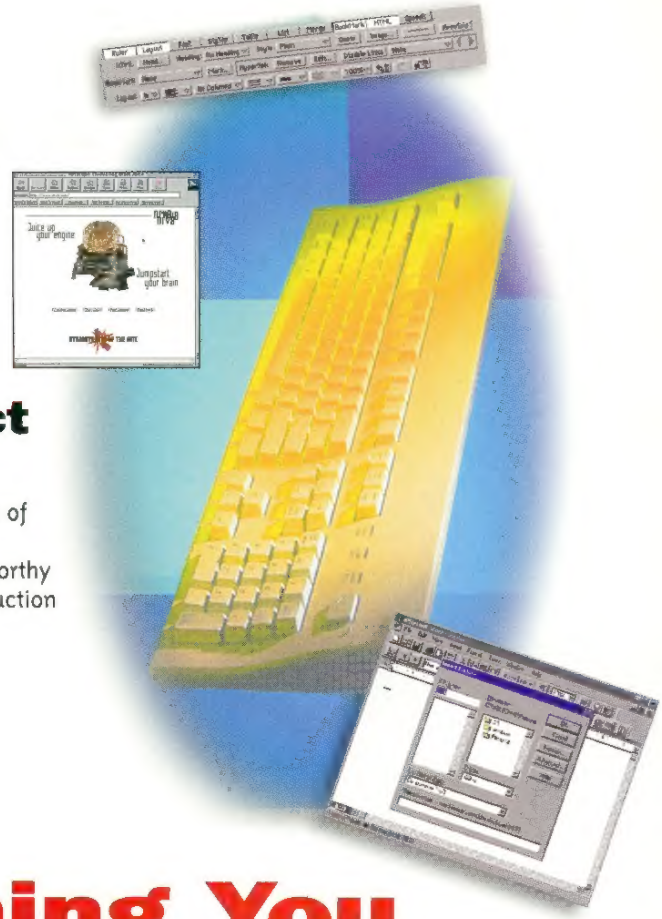

60 **Web Processors:**

## Using the HTML Extensions of Word and WordPerfect

If you're looking for the idea HTML editor, Chris Martin doesn't recommend you run out to buy the latest versions of WordPerfect and Microsoft Word. But, his head-to-head comparison of their HTML capabilities finds that they're worthy add-ons to your word processor, and offer a great introduction to working with Web documents.

44 ***cover story***

**SPECIAL 16-PAGE REPORT:**

# Everything You Need to Know About Sex Online

Our special Valentine's Day package dishes up the goods about sex online:

- **Finding Romance Online:** pages 45-48
- **The Instant Love Line:** pages 49-50
- **Erotica for Sale:** pages 50-51
- **Hot News:** page 52
- **Anti-Stalking Measures:** pages 52-53
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# netPower

## INSTRUCTIONS on how to get to the mirrored sites, extended resource lists, Blue Pages, and the *netPOWER* Starter Kit:

### Windows

**1.** Open your Web browser.
**2.** Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the File menu. (Note: If you are a Pipeline NY customer, you will need to use a different browser, as Pipeline's browser does not allow you to open local files.)
**3.** Choose "D:\START.HTM" (assuming D: is your CD drive). Be sure that the open dialog says "show .htm files" if you're using a browser from an online service.

### Macintosh

**1.** Open your Web browser.
**2.** Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the file menu.
**3.** Click on the "desktop" button, open "netPOWER," and then open "START.HTM."
**4.** Alternatively, you can drag the START.HTM file on top of your browser's icon to open it.

## *netPOWER* includes myriad stuff that you'll want to see, play with, and read, including:

### The A List:

This is *netPOWER*'s monthly roundup of the best sites from the pages of *The Net*. Check them out through either the direct links or site mirrors*.

**netPOWER* contains "mirrors" of the Web sites we've given an A rating. By mirroring, we mean that we've stored locally on this CD-ROM the Web pages you would see if you were cruising the Internet and had accessed that particular site. By mirroring them on the CD, we've made sure you'll have easy access to these sites, without having to wait as long for downloads and displays as you would if you were traveling over the net.

### Starter Kit:

*netPOWER*'s monthly collection of the latest in Web authoring software and Internet resources.

### Extended Resource Lists:

This month's issue of *The Net* focuses on that age-old human obsession: sex. *netPOWER* contains extended lists of Web sites from the serious (AIDS and HIV) to the fun (online dating).

### The Blue Pages:

An incredible resource of hundreds of links to geographical resources, investment sites, zine sites, and more.

### Shareware:**

A hodgepodge of games, utilities, and, er, other stuff.

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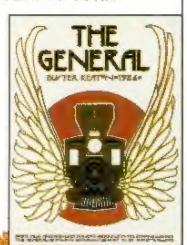



### Mirrored Museums:

The Russian Chronicles, University Art Museum (in Berkeley, CA), and the Pacific Film Archives.

ADVERTISING

They make it all possible, so check 'em out: America Online and Global Network Navigator (GNN).

**To install America Online on Windows:**
**1:** Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive and turn on your modem if it is external.
**2:** In Windows 3.1, go to the "Program Manager" window; in Windows 95, go to the "Start" button. Choose "Run" from the file menu and Type "D:/AOL/SETUP.EXE" (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
**3:** Click on "OK" to continue, then follow the onscreen instructions. When the installation is complete, double-click on the America Online icon.
**4:** When prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve to begin your FREE trial.

**To install America Online on the Macintosh:**
**1:** Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive and turn on your modem if it is external.
**2:** Locate the America Online icon in the America Online folder on your desktop. Double-click on the AOL icon.
**3:** Follow the on-screen instructions and, when prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve to begin your FREE trial.

GNN gives you fast and easy access to the World Wide Web, newsgroups, and more. It also lets you explore the net using WebCrawler, the easy-to-use Internet directory search tool. And, installation is simple, and there's free customer support.

**Here's How to Sign on to GNN:**
**1.** Insert this CD in your CD-ROM drive (assuming D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive).
**2.** Select "Run" from the file menu of your Windows' "Program Manager." Either choose "Browse" and locate the GNNPRESS folder which contains the GNN setup, or type "D:\GNNPRESS\SETUP.exe," and click on "OK" to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.
**3.** Then, follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen. When prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve.

**NOTE:** Windows 95 users replace Step 2 above as follows: Click on the "Start" button on the Windows 95 Task Bar and select "Run," type "D:\GNNPRESS\SETUP," and click on "OK" to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.

Questions about connecting? Contact GNN Customer Support at 800 819 6112.

# letters to the editors

## Need Some Ray Bans?

I'm a regular reader of *Internet World* and *NetGuide*. I was recently browsing the magazine racks for the December issue of *NetGuide*. I couldn't find it but came across the December issue of *The Net*. Cover-wise, and after a quick flip-through, it seemed a tad funky for my rather mainstream taste in net mags. I thought I'd pick up an issue anyway and give it a try.

I must confess I was pleasantly surprised to find that, despite needing Ray Bans to deflect the bombardment by graphic-intensive page layouts, the quality of the articles, reviews, and features is first-rate. January's looking even brighter already...

*David Lackman*
*dlack@idirect.com*

A message to the Generation X person who didn't like the letter from the Boomer, because he objected to the format of your magazine. I'm also a Boomer. I like your format, but it takes a little getting used to because it's so different.

*Richard Stein*
*102726.3463@compuserve.com*

## Staying Current:

I've been following your publication since its inception. I have found it to be extremely useful to those of us in the "middle echelons" of computer use: We use computers and software (and might even like using them), but aren't programmers.

I rather resent the attitude I sense in Stevan Alburty's otherwise excellent piece in the November 95 issue ("Ad Nauseam"): that so many advertisers "have deputized somebody in the computer department who taught him/herself HTML and boom, they're in business." Surprise: Just about anybody in technical editing or graphics who wants to keep his job (much less advance) has to stay current, and the only way that happens is for us to "teach ourselves" HTML, Web authoring, interactive programming, cross-platform troubleshooting, etc. I think you'd be surprised just how many people have learned all their computing skills at On-The-Job U.

*Steve Murdock*
*murdocks@cfw.com*

***Steve Alburty responds:*** **It was not my intention to insult auto-didacts. In fact, I dropped out of college and everything I know about computers, I taught myself by reading manuals, experimenting, and driving people crazy with questions.**

**My criticisms were directed more at ad agencies that minimize the importance of this new medium by passing themselves off to their clients as experts when their only resource may be somebody with only the most fundamental capabilities.**

## Billboards on the Info Highway:

After reading your article on advertising on the net (November 95), I sat and thought about this subject for awhile and realized that a response to *The Net* would be in order. First, the great thing about Web sites is that you can choose to visit them or not, so if you wanted to, you could stay away from that part of the "Information Super Highway" that is lined up on either side of the road with fast food restaurants.

However, something that I thought you should have mentioned was advertising through e-mail and the Usenet. I know personally that recently, when I logged on and checked my e-mail, there were letters trying to sell me something, and on Usenet, messages marketing something else. Now, as the Internet evolves as a new medium, the question is: Do we want e-mail to turn into recorded phone calls and the Usenet to turn into billboards along the road?

Yes, being able to look at certain products on the Web is great, since you can bypass sites if you want, but advertising in e-mail and Usenet messages is not. I'm only 13 and though my experience and knowledge are limited, I know that this is not what I want the future of the net to be. It's for the most part still clean and pure of soliciting, so let's keep it that way.

*MCGski@aol.com*

## Kudos:

I purchased your December 95 issue w/CD-ROM recently. I am a long-time net resident and consider myself reasonably adept, but I was curious and I was well-rewarded for the money I spent.

The HTML file idea is neat and I got to see some sites I never would have thought to look for. BRAVO.

*Brian B. Riley*
*brianbr@together.net*

I work here at Common Grounds Internet Cafe. We all fight over the newest copy of *The Net* when it comes in. I love your Off The Wire page and the Bizarre sites listed. I'm constantly being asked, "Can you show me something cool?" And your magazine and Web site are the best thing I've found to refer to.

*Geoff Belknap*
*vrebel@cgicafe.com*

I love your mag. The Blue Pages are my best friend in the world, and that CD that you are putting out with it rocks. You guys sound like you have a lot of fun there. The mag does not read like a text book, like most of them out there. I have every copy so far and will keep getting them, and let me tell you, that is a big deal. I have gotten a copy of about every net mag there is out there (if it is in English).

*Nathaniel Raddin*
*cenobyte@oz.net*

Since getting my first issue of *The Net*, I have been in competition with my wife (who is a school teacher) to read the magazine!

We both are very impressed with the amount of information about the many different sites referenced in each issue. The diversity means that although we both have different interests and uses for the contents of the magazine, we both look forward to the next issue.

My wife, who is trying to get her school to become more Internet-focused, is using your magazine on a regular basis in working with her students and educating the other teachers! Keep up the good work!

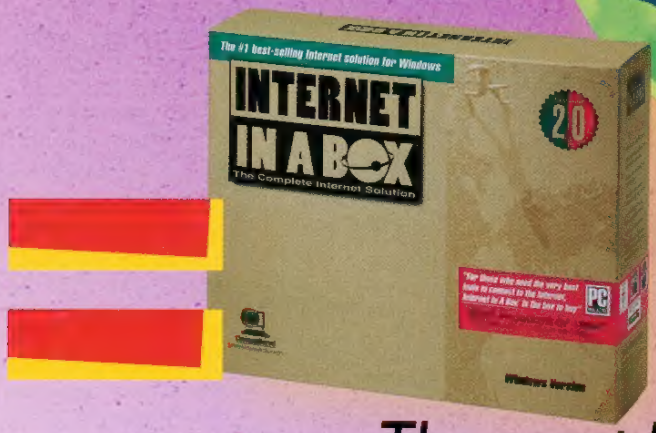
*Kenneth Drude*
*kdrude@erinet.com*

## More on Hacking:

While the perspective Ms. Milhon gives (in her column, "Hacking the Big System:

# the ease of an online service

# the thrill of the internet

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Culture Hacking," in the November 95 issue, p. 11) on hacking is a pretty one, unfortunately, I would have to disagree. "I am going to give you some insider info on how to hack The Big System..."? You make it seem as though there is some sort of a common goal amongst all the hackers on this planet. Fortunately, that isn't the case. If it were, we would have one hell of a secure "Big System" in cyberspace. It would be the same as sending the whole U.S. military to blow up one enemy location — and having them all take the same route in (the front door). Fortunately, that's not how it works.

Hacking is not coordinated, at least not on a global level. Perhaps the different "little systems" (my own term) being hacked contribute to the building of cyberspace society on a global level, but hackers are not out screwing up computers to change the world, they're doing it because it's fun. Perhaps you should do a little more research into what "real" hackers do before your next article.

*Chris Hart*
*chart@klink.net*

Ever since my dad purchased a computer in June of last year, I was fascinated with the Internet. I purchased books and magazines and gathered information from all the sources I could find. Needless to say, I was beaming the day when my father found the space to move our computer near our telephone line. I started out with AOL access, but frankly, it sucked. It was slow and clanky and it wasn't enough to satisfy my needs. So, I finally managed to get my act together and get a direct provider. I was ecstatic. I loved the idea of being a REAL Internet user, and not some newbie fool.

Within a week, I had a second phone line and was spending the majority of my free time online. All was going well until one fateful day, when I had a foolish idea. I had read stories and talked to my computer friends and somehow had the idea that the only way to become a real force on the Internet was to get involved with the crowd known as hackers. So I found the FTP sites, and I got the programs, and for a while I felt as though I was really cool. I saw people who made credit card generators and viruses as the greatest guys alive. I was so caught up in the whole hacker mentality that I forgot the real reason I came on the Internet in the first place.

I didn't use any of the numerous programs I had acquired, of course. I wasn't a REAL hacker, after all, I was just one of a million stupid kids who thinks stealing from other people is fun. I never thought for a second that I could be in danger, until one day when I accidentally downloaded a Trojan virus. I found out that it was there at about 10 p.m. and I stayed up all night on the phone with my customer support guy trying to isolate it. In the end, I was forced to erase my hard drive entirely. I lost six months of customization and work. All my games were erased, but that wasn't the real problem. You see, games can be reloaded and you can do it all again.

The greatest loss was for my father (this was our family computer). He lost months of poetry and two chapters of a novel he was working on. He had poured his heart and soul into those writings. So, I guess the moral of this story is that hackers aren't as cool as they seem. They lie, cheat and steal, but worst of all, they hurt.

I can still go on the Internet, but I am constantly afraid of getting another virus. Whoever did this to me didn't just destroy data, he destroyed a big section of my life and left me with indescribable paranoia. So, if you're in the same position I was in, turn your interests elsewhere. There is so much to be accomplished on the Internet that doesn't hurt anyone.

*Jesse*
*captjanx@usa.pipeline.com*

## AOHell:

Just read your December issue, in particular, the article regarding the problem America Online has been having with hackers ("AOL vs. AOHell").

Contrary to everything I've read in all the computer magazines, including yours, I have yet to see why everyone keeps hawking AOL as the best. Even after you discuss the problems it's having with security (which seem to be a major problem to me), it's still touted as being so wonderful. Well, count me out. I gave AOL a fair shake. Plugged in their trial disk and hopped on. Not for long, though. Within a week, I was constantly being disconnected. I tried online help to no avail (I was told to "just keep trying").

Finally, I called AOL's 800-number. I was on hold for 45 minutes before a human being came on, and then was disconnected from him! Give me Prodigy anytime. It's cheaper (I have the economical 30/30 plan, which you guys never mention). When I call Prodigy's 800-number for any reason, a real human being is there pronto, and I have not been disconnected ONCE from either Prodigy's service OR its phone line. Tune in to one of Prodigy's chat rooms. You'll find dozens of ex-AOL users who got fed up with their accounts being tinkered with and who are enjoying the uninterrupted joy of plugging right into the Web on a safer Prodigy. AOHell is right!

*Nona Robinson*
*ZZEP83A@Prodigy.com*

I find your decision to run "AOL vs. AOHell" extremely questionable. David Cassel is a frequent and opinionated poster to alt.aol-sucks and can hardly be considered an objective journalist. Given the fact that all of his primary sources are comrades from alt.aol-sucks, you should have clearly marked his piece "opinion."

Cassel's grasp of the facts is also less than satisfactory. For example, he refers to an "intercepted message... from an AOL employee supposedly threatening legal action against the 'Why AOL Sucks' Web page... who said he would search Web sites for pages offering AOHell...." From what I've read on alt.aol-sucks, the supposed threat and intercepted message referring to a search of the Web were two separate incidents, separated by a span of six months or more.

"Reportedly"; "appeared to be"; "supposedly"; "apparently"; "according to 'Asciirider'"; "reportedly"; "(This could not be confirmed at press time.)"; " 'Asciirider' believes"; " 'Asciirider' estimates"; "AOL would neither confirm nor deny." Where are the *facts* in this piece?

Please choose your contributing writers more carefully in the future.

*blues@cais.com*

**Unfortunately, press relations people can't always tell journalists the "whole truth," whether for legal reasons or to save corporate face. In our experience, however, when a company will "neither confirm nor deny" something (thereby theoretically changing a rumor into a fact), it generally means that something *did* or *will* happen...**

**By the way, with whom did you confirm *your* facts?**

First of all, I'm a 16-year-old high school student at Rossford High School in Rossford, OH. We're a suburb of Toledo. I just recently bought the December issue of your magazine. I'm in LOVE!!

About your story, "AOL vs.

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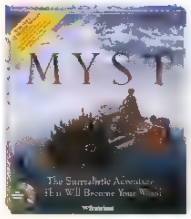


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Computer Tutor. 5032404
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Adventure 5002803
DOS | MAC | 386 | LC | 4mb | 8mb | M

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**7th Guest**
Interact. Game 5004700
DOS | MAC | 386/33 | LCIII | 4mb | M

**Shanghai Great Moments**
Strategy Game 5031802
WIN31 | MAC | 486/33 | LCI | 8mb | M

**King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride**
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**Daedalus Encounter**
Interact. Game 5034707
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**Woodruff And The Schnibble**
Adventure 5037304
WIN31 | 486 | 4mb | M

**Bodyworks CD 4.0**
Medical Ref. 5036702
WIN31 | MAC | 386/25 | LCI | 4mb | M

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AOHell" (page 14). As a coder, or programmer, I know that if I don't like doing something over and over, here I come with a program. Writing a program is not illegal.

Flaws in programming, however small, are flaws. If someone UTILIZES a flaw so that he can benefit... well, that's his choice. Think about this (on the utilizing topic): You're walking down the street and you see a $5 bill. Do you leave it? Do you take it to the closest business? *MOST* of us wouldn't. We just look around and check if someone's looking and put it in our pockets. That was utilizing what we find. Just like in the AOHell case. I back the writer of this program. He used very ingenious techniques to write a very good program. (I've seen it used.)

One more comment on that one. AOL knew and KNOWS about this program. Why doesn't it correct it? Why doesn't it use what this person did to benefit itself? You can't stop the software from spreading, but what about reversing the effects? How about this idea? Don't DELETE people's account just for one incident. Suspend them. Take those users' access away for a week. For Pete's sake, don't delete them, because then they make another account.

*Adam Mandell*
*Adam.Mandell@mediccom.nordeni.com*

## Blue in the Face:

Ack, me again... In response to Blue Grrrl's response to my letter (December 95, page 05), I have the following to say: What does bashing Republicans and having a "leftist bias" have to do with writing an interesting WWW page review? Furthermore, I certainly do not want you to "avoid everything you like" just to please me...

However, I don't see the point in alienating a segment of your readers by making fun of their views and of people they may or may not admire... It only hurts the magazine in the long run. My beef with the reviews of your political pages is that you seem to review right-wing pages, THEN consistently interject some uncalled for remark (sometimes funny, sometimes just anti-whatever). I have yet to see you do that with a mainstream leftist page. Personally, I am not looking for you to suddenly make fun of Democrats, because that's not why I read the reviews...

*Vincent Macaluso*
*doctor@bbs.exoticomm.com*

I wanted to drop you a line about Blue Grrrl's reply to Vincent Macaluso in the letters section of the December issue. I'm a photographer and writer, and a sometime-college professor.

I want to say that I think you were right on the mark in your reply. Well, maybe not *right* on the mark— I think actually your position is more important than you even claimed it to be. Your approach isn't important just because it means you avoid being boring (although I certainly agree that's important), but because of what you called "honesty and integrity." Unfortunately, I'm not sure about the "credibility"— too much of the press in this country seems to think that their credibility rests on their not admitting what their ideas, perspectives, or approaches are.

This doesn't make members of the press more "objective," as they would like to think — only harder to really understand. Instead of saying what they think, telling us (as you said), "who they are," and letting us be clear where they're coming from, they try to submerge their own feelings. In the process, they inevitably slant their coverage (because we *all* have positions, whether we admit it or not) in ways that are hard to pick up. So, instead of giving us what they (like Macaluso) would call "bias" (whether of the Left, the Right, or any other flavor), but what I would call honesty in media, they give us much more subtle sales pitches that really undermine the possibility of serious exchange. To put it another way: They trade honesty for commercialized "credibility."

It's no accident that in the countries where there is a lively and compelling journalism, a journalism that helps people to shape informed ideas and, yes, opinions, a journalism that supports a seriously involved citizenry — and in those areas of the U.S. media that share those qualities — we can always tell "who they are."

So, thanks for what you're doing. I'm so pleased that I'll support you in the only way that really gets measured in our society — I'm sending in my subscription (via snail mail).

*Steve Cagan*
*stevecagan@igc.apc.org*

**At *The Net*, our mission is to provide a commentary on the online world, and provoke thoughtful discussion, which it appears we've been successful at doing. Let's keep the dialog lines open.**

I just picked up my first copy of *The Net* (December 95) and I found it very good... Well, almost very good.

I checked out some of the sites and they were entertaining. And I do like your Blue Pages... but... well, I'm not looking forward to the next blue pages. I am not into sports in any way shape or fashion, then again, I wasn't into the religion stuff either. But I did find your stuff excellent otherwise.

*Thomas Eugene Peters*
*tepeters@alpha.delta.edu*

**It's hard to please everyone, isn't it? But we've taken your comments to heart. And, starting with our March issue, you'll find a vastly expanded Web site review section, with 24 different categories of sites consistently reviewed and rated.**

**So, if you don't care about sports — which is indeed one of the topics, or religion, or politics — but you are into, oh, chess, or art, or film, you'll find lots of reviews of sites dealing with these topics, as well as plenty of others (In case you're not interested in those, either). So, stay tuned!**

## Page for Dummies:

I picked up my first copy of *The Net* (December 95) yesterday. I would like to suggest a page for us dummies. I am 50 years old and a computer dummy, but I am trying to learn. I feel like I have stepped into the twilight zone with this computer. I live in rural Missouri and it cost me about $20 an hour to get online because of the long distance phone charges to the nearest information highway access point. I have a million questions, mostly about slang words. What are "URLs"? Like I said, I am a computer dummy. Living out here in country bumpkin land, I have no schools to teach me. I am lucky to get a magazine about computers here because nobody has one but me.

Anyway, a dummy page that explains step by step things we dummies can do to learn to use the net, and a dictionary of slang, would be a good start. Like I said, I'm a dummy. How many are out there like me, who are old and trying to keep up with the new generation? Wish I was born 25 years later. I love where they're going.

*TPRGIEP@aol.com*

**"URLs" stand for "Universal Resource Locators." Basically, an URL is the name for a World Wide Web address. For example, *The Net*'s World Wide Web address is http://www.thenet-usa.com/.**

## Need Some Ray Bans?

I'm a regular reader of *Internet World* and *NetGuide*. I was recently browsing the magazine racks for the December issue of *NetGuide*. I couldn't find it but came across the December issue of *The Net*. Cover-wise, and after a quick flip-through, it seemed a tad funky for my rather mainstream taste in net mags. I thought I'd pick up an issue anyway and give it a try.

I must confess I was pleasantly surprised to find that, despite needing Ray Bans to deflect the bombardment by graphic-intensive page layouts, the quality of the articles, reviews, and features is first-rate. January's looking even brighter already...

*David Lackman*
*dlack@idirect.com*

A message to the Generation X person who didn't like the letter from the Boomer, because he objected to the format of your magazine. I'm also a Boomer. I like your format, but it takes a little getting used to because it's so different.

*Richard Stein*
*102726.3463@compuserve.com*

## Staying Current:

I've been following your publication since its inception. I have found it to be extremely useful to those of us in the "middle echelons" of computer use: We use computers and software (and might even like using them), but aren't programmers.

I rather resent the attitude I sense in Stevan Alburty's otherwise excellent piece in the November 95 issue ("Ad Nauseam"): that so many advertisers "have deputized somebody in the computer department who taught him/herself HTML and boom, they're in business." Surprise: Just about anybody in technical editing or graphics who wants to keep his job (much less advance) has to stay current, and the only way that happens is for us to "teach ourselves" HTML, Web authoring, interactive programming, cross-platform troubleshooting, etc. I think you'd be surprised just how many people have learned all their computing skills at On-The-Job U.

*Steve Murdock*
*murdocks@cfw.com*

***Steve Alburty responds:*** **It was not my intention to insult auto-didacts. In fact, I dropped out of college and everything I know about computers, I taught myself by reading manuals, experimenting, and driving people crazy with questions.**

**My criticisms were directed more at ad agencies that minimize the importance of this new medium by passing themselves off to their clients as experts when their only resource may be somebody with only the most fundamental capabilities.**

## Billboards on the Info Highway:

After reading your article on advertising on the net (November 95), I sat and thought about this subject for awhile and realized that a response to *The Net* would be in order. First, the great thing about Web sites is that you can choose to visit them or not, so if you wanted to, you could stay away from that part of the "Information Super Highway" that is lined up on either side of the road with fast food restaurants.

However, something that I thought you should have mentioned was advertising through e-mail and the Usenet. I know personally that recently, when I logged on and checked my e-mail, there were letters trying to sell me something, and on Usenet, messages marketing something else. Now, as the Internet evolves as a new medium, the question is: Do we want e-mail to turn into recorded phone calls and the Usenet to turn into billboards along the road?

Yes, being able to look at certain products on the Web is great, since you can bypass sites if you want, but advertising in e-mail and Usenet messages is not. I'm only 13 and though my experience and knowledge are limited, I know that this is not what I want the future of the net to be. It's for the most part still clean and pure of soliciting, so let's keep it that way.

*MCGski@aol.com*

## Kudos:

I purchased your December 95 issue w/CD-ROM recently. I am a long-time net resident and consider myself reasonably adept, but I was curious and I was well-rewarded for the money I spent.

The HTML file idea is neat and I got to see some sites I never would have thought to look for. BRAVO.

*Brian B. Riley*
*brianbr@together.net*

I work here at Common Grounds Internet Cafe. We all fight over the newest copy of *The Net* when it comes in. I love your Off The Wire page and the Bizarre sites listed. I'm constantly being asked, "Can you show me something cool?" And your magazine and Web site are the best thing I've found to refer to.

*Geoff Belknap*

### corrections

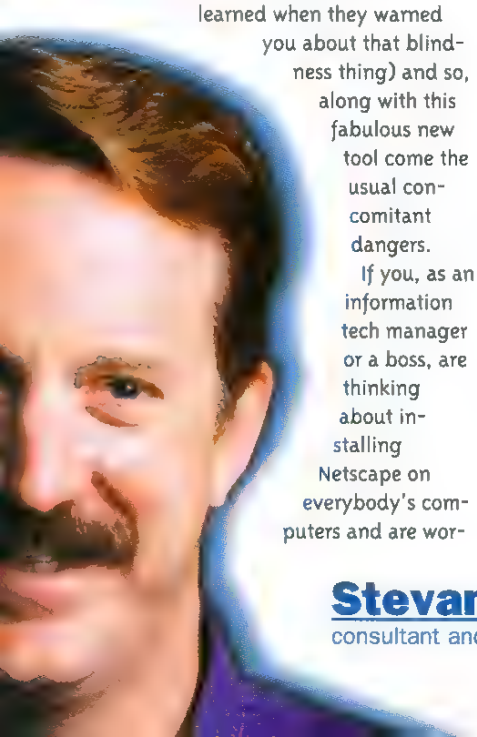
- **The address for the Virtual Kissing Booth (December 95 issue, page 86) is http://ww.white-hawk.com/ vkb/.**
- **The address for Cybergrass in the December CD-ROM was incorrect. It's http://www.banjo.com/BG/.**
- **In a news story (November 95 issue, page 16), we incorrectly referred to Zenographics as a printer. It's actually a printing utility that works with your printer.**
- **In the December 95 issue, our description of how to create tables for Web pages used an incorrect tag. The correct syntax is: TD COLSPAN=4 (note the space between the TD and COLSPAN).**
- **Alchemy Mindworks' GIF Construction Set has a new version, 1.0d, and it includes an eyedropper to pick out the value of a color (see November 95, page 70).**
- **The URL for Steve Mann's Webcam (Bizarre Site o' the Month, December 95) is: http://www-white.media.mit.edu:80/~stever/html9/myviews.html.**
- **In a news story on Concentric's BBS network (October 95, page 17), we inaccurately reported that users get "unlimited access to all the BBSs in the service and the Internet." In actuality, Concentric does not cover the actual BBS fees, but hooks them up to them so users don't have to pay long-distance fees.**

If you want to send us a letter using e-mail, our address is: **talktous@thenet-usa.com**. Our postal address is 1350 Old Bayshore Hwy, Suite 210, Burlingame, CA 94010. ■

# The Web in the Workplace

Before I became a consultant, I used to actually work for a living. I had a real job in corporate America and, as an employee, I was always on time, kept long hours and never permitted myself to fall prey to the fraternal demons of idleness and sloth, making sure that every minute of my working day was spent in reverential focus on the goals and tasks to which I was assigned. (And if you believe that, please contact me if you would be interested in investing your life savings in a Broadway musical I'm writing based on the life of Vanna White.)

In the good old days, all a corporation had to worry about was whether or not its employees were stealing paper clips. Now, the average boss has a veritable cornucopia of concerns — sexual harassment, substance abuse, the resolution of employee grievances through the use of semi-automatic weapons. And now comes the newest worry in the workplace: the Web. More and more businesses, after having invited the world into their companies through the installation of a Web site, are now giving their own employees outbound access to the Internet. Life has a particularly ugly way of compensating for each new blessing it bestows (as you learned when they warned you about that blindness thing) and so, along with this fabulous new tool come the usual concomitant dangers.



If you, as an information tech manager or a boss, are thinking about installing Netscape on everybody's computers and are worried that your employees will start downloading sexually explicit material or spending valuable worktime checking out sports scores on the Web, relax — they will. There. Don't you just feel better knowing the answer?

Employees are not "human resources." They are people. And people occasionally enjoy being silly and stupid. With the exception of Senator Al D'Amato, they rarely make a career out of it. The question for managers is what your employees will do on the net after they've gotten their jollies by pushing the Really Big Button That Doesn't Do Anything (**http://www.wam.umd.edu/~twoflowr/button.htm**) or visiting The House of Socks (**http://www.caprica.com/~jmares/house_of_socks.html/**). (I don't know about these Web sites *personally*, you understand. Somebody told me about them.)

**Serendipitous exploration is considered healthy and ultimately beneficial to the organization.**

Mike DeValera manages the computer systems for the Charles A. Dana Foundation (**http://danany.dana.org**), a 30-employee philanthropic organization in New York and Washington, D.C. that awards grants in the fields of health and education. (They seemed uninterested in funding my musical.) Internet access there is six months old, and users have found the Web to be "beyond helpful," says DeValera. "We found a list of all of the e-mail addresses of all of the members of the National Academy of Science on the Web." To an organization which gives away money to scientists, this type of find is valuable to donor and recipient alike.

Are his fingernails nibbled to the quick with worry about what sinful or silly sites employees may be visiting? "This tends to be a non-Newt kind of place," he points out, "where contrarian values are not disparaged." Serendipitous exploration is considered healthy and ultimately beneficial to the organization. Here are three handy maxims for anyone granting net access to their employees:

- Do not drop the net on your users' doorsteps like a foundling. Train them on how to find resources that will be relevant to their work.
- Develop corporate and departmental home pages rich in links to valuable sites and sources of information.
- Draft, distribute, and display a statement of policy regarding the improper use of the Internet, including software piracy, the posting of unauthorized commentary in newsgroups that might be attributable to the company, and sexual harassment through the display of inappropriate content.

Other than that, treat your employees as grown-ups. Of course, if you do not put much stock in personal freedoms and your sense of George is more Orwell than Washington, there are always products like WebTrack (**http://www.webster.com/**), TattleTale (**http://solidoak.com/**), and Surfwatch (**http://www.surfwatch.com**), which will monitor usage and block access to sites the Corporate Censors deem naughty or noxious.

There is as legitimate a role for the Web in your workplace as there is for the telephone. Both enable an indispensable connection to the outside world, and both can be abused. Employees do not suddenly turn profligate when exposed to the seductions of the Web; bad work ethics usually manifest themselves in other identifiable ways. Managers who are nervous about the negative effects of the Web on their workforce are in reality insecure about their own abilities to hire and inspire those they employ.

When I was a boss, I treated my employees as responsible adults and gave them the latitude to excel in their jobs without the slightest amount of micromanagement or interference. (Did I tell you I'm calling my musical "Wheel!"?) ■

**Stevan Alburty** (**alburty@panix.com**) is a technology consultant and former MIS director of Chiat/Day Advertising.

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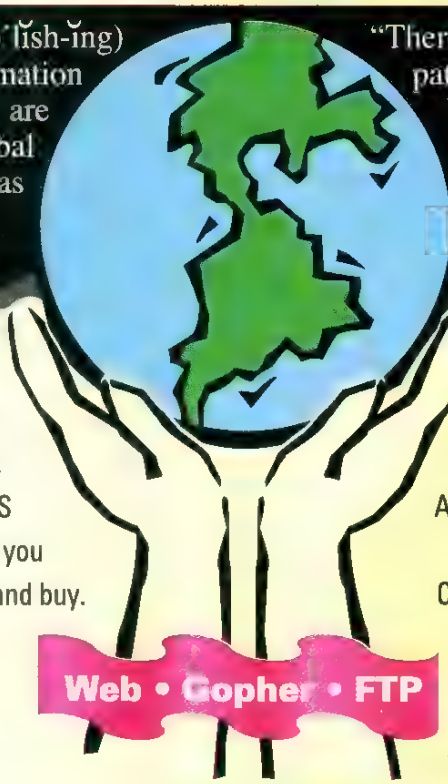
"Anyone interested in desktop publishing will be interested in Web publishing." -Eric Bickford, Mac Webmasters, MacWeek (06.12.95)

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## opinion

# Protecting Our Privacy

Two items in the news recently caught my eye. One of them — an FBI proposal to increase law enforcement's "capacity" to wiretap phone lines — was hard to miss. It generated controversy and news coverage around the country. The other item was a bit more obscure. In an article titled "Future Shock: Surfing the Net in 'Nam," *The Washington Post* reported on the Vietnamese government's efforts to control cyberspace. Apparently, "virtual democracy" is becoming a concern throughout Asia. The article noted: "The worldwide Internet, and the seemingly endless information it makes available to anyone with a computer and a phone line, have presented daunting challenges to Asia's authoritarian regimes from Beijing to Rangoon. The idea of words and thoughts freely expressed and readily available... is enough to shake Asian autocracies to their very core."

**Knowledge is power, and the Internet offers unprecedented capabilities to disseminate and collect information.**

At first blush, the connection between these two stories may not be obvious, but they are related to one another. All governments, whether democratic or totalitarian, are keeping a close eye on the emerging information infrastructure. Knowledge is power, and the net offers unprecedented capabilities to disseminate and collect information. When viewed through that prism, wiretapping proposals and attempts to censor cyberspace are merely different sides of the same coin. Through electronic surveillance, governments seek to obtain information about individuals; through censorship, they seek to keep information away from individuals. Knowledge is power.

In the U.S., surveillance poses a larger threat than does censorship (although we do go through occasional spells of moralistically motivated hysteria over "indecency," like the current "cyberporn" scare — see pages 55-57). The First Amendment has done a good job of protecting our ability to distribute and receive all kinds of information the government might not like. But historically, government agencies have also collected a lot of information about citizens. Whether for legitimate purposes (such as tax enforcement and census counting), or for improper purposes (such as monitoring political activity), powerful entities like the FBI and the IRS have made it a priority to gather information. For data-hungry agencies, the information superhighway is a virtual gold mine. Which brings us to the FBI's wiretapping proposal.

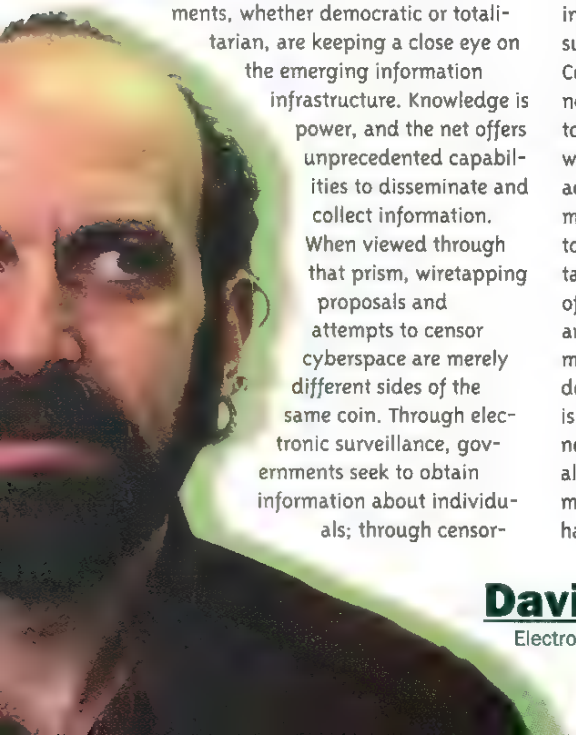
Last year, Congress passed the "Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act" (also known as the "digital telephony" bill). The new law essentially gives the FBI the power to mandate the design of the nation's telecommunications infrastructure to facilitate electronic surveillance. During the debate in Congress, the Bureau claimed that it was not attempting to expand its wiretapping activity, but was merely seeking to maintain the status quo in the new digital environment. So, it came as something of a surprise when the Bureau recently announced its proposed "capacity requirements" under the new law. While the details are quite technical, the bottom line is that the FBI wants to be able to simultaneously monitor as much as one percent of all communications traffic in major metropolitan areas. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but even the most conservative estimates suggest that these requirements would permit law enforcement agencies to monitor 2,000+ telephone calls in New York City at any given time. That's an enormous amount of surveillance when you consider that the average number of authorized *annual* wiretaps *nationwide* is currently around 800. (More information on electronic surveillance can be found at **http://www.epic.org/privacy/wiretap/**).

**For data-hungry government agencies like the FBI, the information superhighway is a virtual gold mine.**

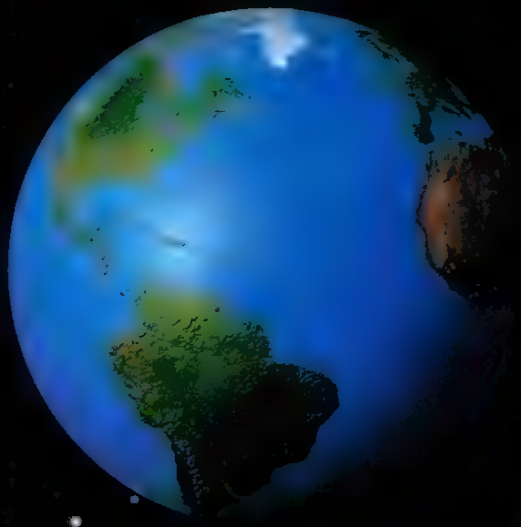
The FBI continues to maintain that it has no intention of expanding its surveillance activities, but its recent proposal suggests otherwise. As *The New York Times* observed in a strongly worded editorial, the Bureau's request "is an indefensible bid for vast new wiretapping capability." Why would law enforcement need such a capability? Does the FBI anticipate an explosion of criminal activity? Probably not. The more likely explanation is that the Bureau anticipates an explosion of electronic communication via the Internet and various online services. More e-mail, more real-time chatting, more electronic commerce. More information. As I said, a virtual gold mine just waiting to be tapped (literally).

It's a serious issue, but one that should be kept in perspective. We are not Vietnam, where the government (according to one official) is attempting to "create a firewall... to protect against information databases and to purify the incoming information flow." In America, the net can fulfill its potential to empower us with vast and unlimited stores of knowledge. At the same time, however, it's important that government's ability to collect information be held to the necessary minimum.

The challenge for our democracy is to ensure that the firewalls we erect are designed not to "purify the incoming information flow," but to protect our privacy. ■



**David Sobel** (**sobel@epic.org**) is a legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, based in Washington, D.C.



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**opinion**

# Just How Virtual *IS* Valerie

I think I have *Virtual Valerie 2* figured out, and if I'm right, this CD-ROM game is a sly feminist triumph. I'm not *sure* about this, mind, because I haven't checked my theory with the guy who dreamed it up — Mike Saenz — but I know he's a wicked ironic sorta guy. I think he designed *VV2* to be a teaching device, a flight simulator for sex. That's no big surprise, perhaps, but what it teaches you *might* be. If I'm right, it's got a wicked feminist premise. *VV2* teaches you how to score, literally, with a female, by playing her like a video pinball machine. But the joke's on you.

**VV2 teaches you how to score, literally, with a female, by playing her like a video pinball machine. But the joke's on you.**

I reached these strange conclusions after playing *VV2* for hours and hours in zombie mode, my usual behavior when I get a game that interests me. Slowly, I began to catch sight of a hidden pattern.

Could I be right about this? I decided to set up an experiment — human testing, on an actual male human.

My darqside hacker buddy fires Val up, so to speak, and I watch him investigate the territory. "She looks like a doll," he says disgustedly.

"Yeah, I think that's part of the message," I sneer back at him, mysteriously. He sets up a configuration I'd found impossible to score in, and I tell him so. "Well, *I'm* gonna make it work," he sez with a masculine grimace, hands flickering like heat lightning over the keyboard. Valerie does feedback: She moans some, and says X-rated-movie sorts of things. This is just part of the shtick, according to my theory — I've seen dirty movies and they all used the same 10 lines of dialogue, in rotation, in the sex scenes. Valerie says them all, equally randomly.

I watch Darqhax turn up the speed control, and continuously fiddle the other — well, yes — knobs. After a swift bit of mode-changing, we hear a popping-cork sound. Ooops. "You moron," Val remarks coolly over her shoulder, and the score sinks several points. I'm enjoying this more than she is, fer sher. Maybe more than Darqhax, too. He's getting tired, he's slowing down, but he's doggedly, so to speak, keepin on... and finally, he hits the Valerie jackpot! There's a blinking light, some cheesy lounge music, and the sound of

coins ratcheting out of what the Brits call a fruit machine — over here, we call them slots. I crack up at his reaction. This is not the payoff he expected. As I fall about laughing, I give him my interpretation of the game: It's a RE-training device, a satire on male sexual strategies. Brilliant.

Imagine you're male, you're 14, you're a virgin. All you know is what you've been told, so you've built up a vision of sex as — of course — a sort of video pinball game. You make the right moves at each point and things light up and the score accumulates. The goal is to be so fast and slick that you score BIG. And, as every guy over the age of eight now knows, the really big score comes simultaneously with the object of your affections. Well, Val IS that object. So, you know what you gotta do.

**More to Play With, in the Way of Toys**

The upgraded *Virtual Valerie* Version 2.0 has terrific maneuverability and many outstanding features. Her features, in fact, are so perfect — and so very outstanding — that Val is like a checklist of hot buttons, starting with blonde hair and jackboots. To get a little ethnological here, if she were a blue-bottomed baboon, she would have a bottom bigger and bluer than possibility allows, its blueness rendered even more provocative by tarty blue lipstick. She's SO ideal that she looks like a plastic inflatable, but hey... Eh? AHA!

You see what's happening here? I think *VV2* may be a satire on what guys are supposed to want, and what they think they're supposed to do when they find it.

Now, as to what happens when you play this game trying to win... and in the course of all that, what *VV2* is retraining you to do, and what REALLY gets Valerie off... Well, the game is a CD-ROM available everywhere and adaptable to all platforms. Four shuriken. Jude-Bob sez check it out.

P.S.: O.K., leaving things like that is not fair. I'm sorry. Here's my take on *VV2*: Valerie is very much like a woman, after all. In fact, *VV2* could either cure you of your heterosexuality, or send you out looking for a real human connection — which might be every bit as strenuous, but might become more rewarding. Sex is not like a video game. And Mike Saenz is a feminist and a genius. ■

**If she were a blue-bottomed baboon, she would have a bottom bigger and bluer than possibility allows...**

**St. Jude** (stjude@well.com) [illegible] al called *HOW TO MUTATE AND TAKE OVER THE WORLD*, which will start popping into existence all over the planet in February.

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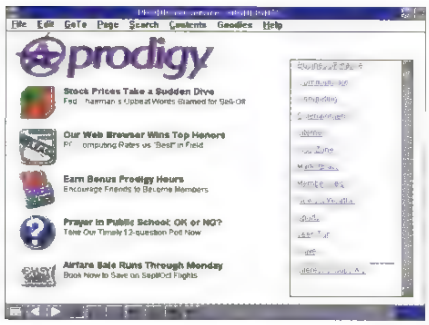


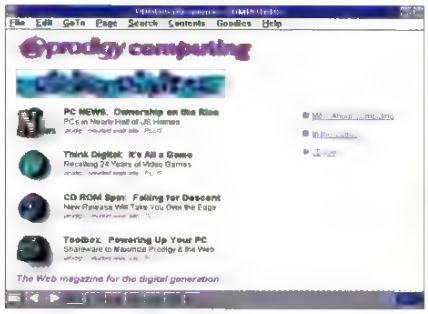


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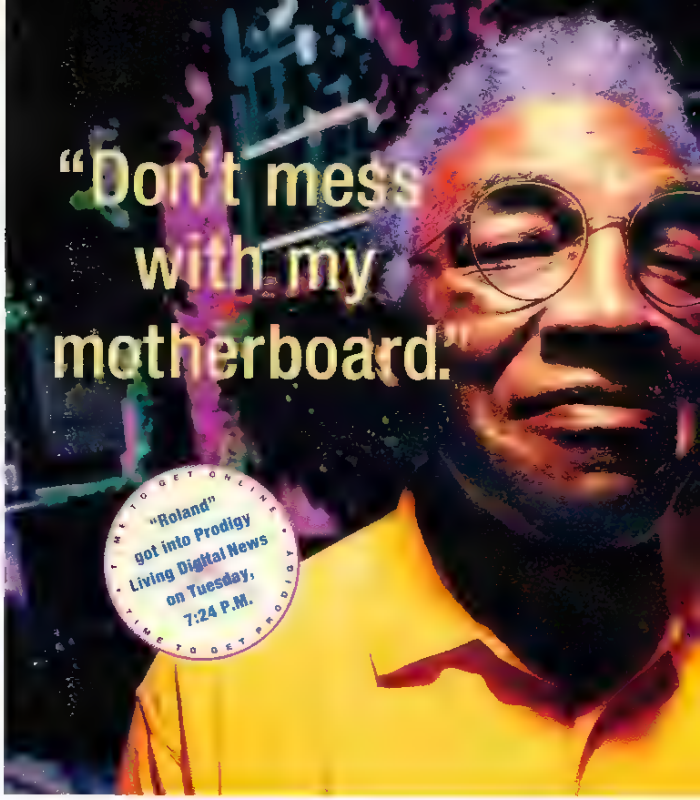


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# news latest from the net

## One World, Microsoft Currency?

Repeating the strategy that made it the world's leading publisher of software, Microsoft, in alliance with Visa, is publishing a standard specification for conducting secure financial transactions over the Internet and other digital communications media.

Because most new applications are written for Microsoft's computer operating systems, the new security specification — known as Secure Transaction Technology (STT) — could become the foundation on which all online financial transactions are based. Owning this underlying structure would give Microsoft and Visa the right to charge a royalty on every online transaction made, though they probably wouldn't enact such a policy until the standard is in wide use. But there are subtler and more immediate ways the companies could benefit from owning this standard. For example, they'll get a jump on developing transaction applications.

The standard represents something of a departure for Microsoft: While Microsoft was able to sell the DOS operating system directly to consumers, it will be forced to publish the STT security standard as an open standard, since that's the only way it will proliferate among Internet users. Microsoft's obvious attempt to become the leader in online commerce previously led it to attempt the purchase of Intuit, which makes Quicken, but that effort was scuttled by the U.S. Department of Justice.

**On one side of the battle for the online commerce standard stand Visa and Microsoft...**

**... On the other side are MasterCard and an array of tech companies, including Netscape, IBM, and GTE Labs.**

Before joining with Microsoft to create the secure payment specification, Visa was working on a similar strategy with its long-time competitor, MasterCard. However, after disagreements over the standard's development, Visa jumped ship and joined with Microsoft. Meanwhile, MasterCard has gone ahead and published its own security initiative, Secure Electronic Payments Protocol (SEPP). It's been endorsed by an impressive array of high-tech companies such as IBM, Netscape, and GTE.

SEPP may have broader support, but Microsoft has become notorious for rejecting standards and protocols published by computer industry groups, and leveraging its power as the leading software publisher to push its own standards. The battle to create a secure payment specification has far more bearing on the future of the Internet than competition over standards such as e-mail protocols. Whoever owns this specification will have influence over the entire online financial infrastructure.

The SEPP specification can be downloaded from **http://www.mastercard.com/Sepp/sepptoc.htm**, while the STT specification is available from the Web sites of Microsoft (**http://www.microsoft.com**) and Visa (**http://www.visa.com**).

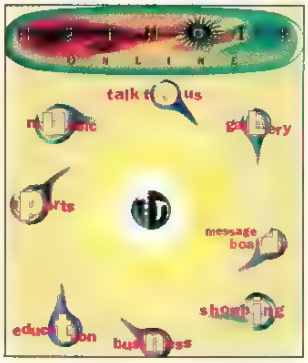
*— WKC*

## NetNoir Interactive Storytelling Adventure

NetNoir, the leading source for online AfroCentric Culture, has added "African Story Lines" to its already outstanding line-up of original content. These stories lead children and adults through African folk tales passed on for centuries by word of mouth.

Besides serving as a historical and cultural tool, the forum boasts great graphics, a 14-page downloadable coloring book, and work-book type exercises for teachers to use in the classroom. NetNoir continues to encourage creativity by offering a space for readers to become story — readers can submit personal versions of the folk tales. You can reach NetNoir via America Online (**keyword NetNoir**) or the World Wide Web at **http://www.netnoir.com**.

*— BG*




**NetNoir's "African Story Lines" teaches visitors age-old African folk tales.**

## Guerrilla Girls Poster the Internet

No, they're not the type of guerrillas who live in trees and eat bananas. They're storm troopers of the art world who use guerrilla-like tactics (in the military sense) to spread their political opinions. Relying on art, music, and performance media to get their message across, Guerrilla Girls represent Poetic Terrorism at its most astonishing and wonderful. ("Poetic Terrorism," a term made famous by anarchist Hakim Bey, refers to the hanging of political posters and flyers in places they "aren't supposed" to be.) And now, Guerrilla Girls are in cyberspace, as "cultural terrorists inciting revolution and diversity in cyberspace," according to Voyager Company. This CD-ROM manufacturer's Web site serves as the new home of the Guerrilla Girls (http://www.voyagerco.com/gg/gg.html).

Most notably, the Guerrilla Girls work against racism and sexism, often using humor and wit to combat social stereotypes. The Web site has posters and propaganda, love letters and hate mail, an ongoing travel diary, a space to express personal viewpoints, and merchandise. A must-see for free thinkers.

— *BG*

Seeking to incite online cultural revolution, the Guerrilla Girls are on the Web.

# Navigating Information on the Internet Attracts the Attention of Big Business

The popular search engine Yahoo (**http://www.yahoo.com/**), begun as a lark by two Stanford grad students, has continued its rapid movement toward maturity. Last summer, it began accepting advertisements (*The Net* October 95, page 12). Now, it's received an equity investment (of 2.5 percent) from a big player: Reuters NewMedia), which currently provides a package of top 10 news stories in five subject categories to Yahoo site visitors.

Yahoo's also received minority stake investments from Sequoia Capital, Open Text Corporation, Softbank Corporation, Ziff-Davis Publishing, and The Capital Group.

Meanwhile, Lycos, another search engine (**http://www.lycos.com/**), has agreed to license its search and indexing technology to Corel for its new *Internet Mania* CD-ROM, which offers a collection of net-related tools, including a Web authoring tool, news scanning features, and FTP utilities. To order Internet Mania, call 800 772 6735, or visit Corel's Web site at **http://www.corel.com**.

— *MS*

As the net continues to grow by leaps and bounds, search engine companies are being courted by an array of investors and licensors.

# Another Search Engine Enters the Fray; Has Full-Text Capabilities

InfoSeek, a Santa Clara, CA company, has introduced a new Internet search engine, InfoSeek Guide (available at **http://guide.infoseek.com**). InfoSeek says it fully integrates Internet directory browsing and searching capabilities and allows users to search the entire Internet, including directory listings, Usenet newsgroups, Web pages, and more. Also, InfoSeek Guide, which is a free service that is advertiser-supported, searches full text, rather than only titles and keywords. Users are given descriptions of the sites collected by InfoSeek Guide, to further help them in their searches. According to Steve Kirsch, president of InfoSeek, the intention of InfoSeek Guide is to be a "roadmap to the Internet that everyone can use and easily understand."

InfoSeek offers another product — InfoSeek Professional — that is a subscription-based pay service.

— *MS*

### A SELECTION OF INTERNET SEARCH ENGINES

**Lycos**
http://www.lycos.com/

**OpenText**
http://www.opentext.com:8080/

**Yahoo**
http://www.yahoo.com/

**InfoSeek**
http://guide.infoseek.com

**WebCrawler**
http://www.webcrawler.com/

**excite NetSearch**
http://www.excite.com/

**Deja News Research Service**
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# Faster, Faster, Give Me Bandwidth

@Home NETWORK

In the race for faster Internet connections, everyone seems to be running for services that offer ISDN access, ISDN/analog modems, and cable modems. Microsoft Network, the online service of Microsoft, has promised ISDN access at more than half of its dial-up numbers. Meanwhile, CompuServe is also exploring ISDN access, and the list goes on and on.

Diamond Multimedia (http://www.diamondmm.com/) recently unleashed a new series of ISDN modems that are part of the plug-'n'-play system for Windows 95. Its Diamond NetCommander ISDN starts at $299. Considering that only a few months ago, ISDN modems were in the $500 range, Diamond's product is significantly more affordable.

And, in Sunnyvale, CA, the company @Home (http://www.home.net/) — on a mission to provide high-speed data services to homes, workplaces, and schools — is launching a cable modem and high-speed local access to test the acceptance and usability of high-speed Internet in mainstream society. Heck, maybe soon we'll all have microchip implant modems and we'll just plug ourselves into digi-stations on any street corner.

*— BG*

Diamond Multimedia's new series of ISDN modems, part of the plug-'n'-play system for Windows 95, promises to make ISDN connections more popular among the masses of computer users.

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## Illustra Database

**While it may be difficult to work up enthusiasm for a database, Illustra's could prove to be an exception. Forget the usual text and numerical data. Illustra has created an object-oriented database that can search and archive shapes, colors, and even textures. So, it's well-suited to Internet applications like online clothing and merchandise catalog shopping. The system architecture is able to accommodate existing and future data types (yes, it's open-ended, to leave room for media advances and needs we don't even suspect yet) via a "snap-in" software application called DataBlade modules. Illustra says the database works very quickly with Web servers and can "process queries an order-of-magnitude faster, and handle about twice as many hits per second," as the company's previous database server.**

**Illustra has a mile-long list of satisfied customers with prestigious names like NaviSoft and Anderson Consulting. According to Scott Rose, manager at Anderson, "Illustra is a core component of the asset management system we have developed. It allows us to manage and manipulate complex media assets directly as data objects." For more information, call Illustra at 510 652 8000 or visit the Web site at http://www.illustra.com.**

*— BG*

# Sony Station Takes on Visa as Commerce Partner

It may not be quite as insidious as its alliance with Microsoft (see page 17), but Visa has also inked a partnership with Sony that further emphasizes its attempt to become a major Internet business. Visa will help launch the Sony Station, which is scheduled for release this spring and represents a next-generation online entertainment network.

Sony Station promises to make Sony's Web presence much more far-reaching than its current one is. Along with the company's arsenal of entertainment and home electronics products, Sony Station will feature entertainment products designed exclusively to take advantage of the interactivity of the Internet. So, for instance, it'll have an online gaming section offering everything from products based on TV game shows to multiplayer action-oriented video games. Sony will provide the content, and Visa will build the online payment infrastructure so that consumers can buy things as diverse as online gaming time and big-screen TVs. If Sony Station is a commercial success, Sony and Visa will have a model for online business that could lead to completely virtual companies.

**Sony's current homepage is about as boring as it gets, but its next generation, Sony Station, will be a graphic treat.**

*— WKC*

# Insuring Your Web Site

I think I've seen it all now. "I didn't think it could happen to us...," says a so-called victim of virus damage. "I didn't think a disgruntled ex-employee could do so much damage,..." says another "victim of fraud." These are testimonials from Data Security Insurance's alarm-inducing pamphlet, in which it offers protection to individuals and businesses accessing the Internet with PCs. Its policy guards against fraud, viruses, or dishonest acts, as well as loss of disks, accidental erasure, and accidental breakage, and much much more.

For just $75 dollars a year, you get $5,000 worth of coverage to pay consultants or replace hardware. Or, if you're a big player, you can pay $325 annually for the $25,000 coverage package. Does that mean we could use our computers for a few years and then "accidentally break" them to get some cash for bigger, better, faster machines? If you want to get in touch with these masterminds, call 800 822 0901. Somehow, I think backing up your system regularly would be more cost-effective.

*— BG*

# Galacticomm Worldgroup Internet Server

**Attention, Kmart shoppers, the blue light is on Internet servers, now available for less than $2,000. Glacticomm has announced a new server that may be perfect for small business and in-the-basement Internet access companies. It runs on a PC, supports 60 simultaneous connections, and requires DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.11, Windows for Workgroups, or Windows 95.**

**The server comes with FTP, Usenet, e-mail, Web, and Telnet support, and has true multi-threading capabilities. For a little extra cash — about $150-$300 each — buyers can add on six more users, searching and faxing capabilities, a major database, and a dial-out option. You could still have an Internet server with 100 percent of everything included for under $3,000.**

**Galacticomm has also created a series of products for the developer's kit, in case you want to build your own graphic user interfaces from scratch, though the company also provides an exceptional interface editor in the product for broad customization features. It's definitely worth looking into. Give 'em a call at 954 583 5990, or visit the Web site at http://www.gcomm.com.**

***— BG***

# No-Cost Advertising Glut

Last November, some net users began receiving more unsolicited commercial e-mail than they'd gotten in the entire year before. And that was just the beginning. Businesses have always been tempted by the prospect of no-cost advertising. But lately, they've become more aggressive, sneaking into mailboxes by disguising their ads as personal e-mail based on a shared interest. There's also the so-called "slow spam" — where advertisers creep onto mailing lists. "Spam" (the Internet term for the mass-produced, unwanted, commercial messages) traditionally appears in newsgroups. One New York-based Web design firm sent Usenet posts containing token content, followed by a blatant pitch for their product. Other businesses have opened free trial accounts on commercial online services. They know the account will eventually be canceled, but not before they've been able to generate free exposure. What's behind the upsurge? A cottage industry. A spam-for-hire figure calling himself the Spam King has been selling the techniques for sending commercial mail and Usenet posts to thousands of users. E-mail America, a Bellevue, WA firm, was bundling e-mail addresses and selling them to advertisers, in packets of five, 10, and 15 million. Profit Education Systems Inc. now sells seminars costing $4,000 that teach attendees how to "cash in big on the Information Superhighway". But it's like that more money is generated from selling the supposed marketing techniques than from actually marketing on the net.

What's ahead? Well, the Spam King recently announced his retirement at a trade show, and E-mail America has agreed to stop selling the addresses. Ironically, the marketers may be the target of the "marketing experts" who sold them on the concept in the first place.

*— Dave Cassel*

# Creative E-mail

**MegaZine, from Nebraska City, wants to get yer creative juices flowing with graphical e-mail. Graphical e-mail makes me think of stationary and clip art, but what they want you to spend $9.95 on is pre-fabricated ASCII art for computers running Windows.**

**ASCII art are cross-platform pictures made out of standard letters and symbols on a computer keyboard. Using MegaZine's product will save you some time if you've been creating your own ASCII picture files. For your very own copy of the program, call 402 873 7622, or send e-mail to megazine@usa.net. For great examples of ASCII art, head over to Scarecrow's Web links at http://miso.wwa.com/~boba/scarecrow.html.**

***— BG***

# Java Jive

The changes Java promises to make to the world of online animation (see the January issue of *The Net*, pages 44-51) will introduce a new era of interaction on the net. But did anyone expect it to change computer jargon? Yes, Java was a clever name, so clever that it's spawned a new slew of Java-related software products with names like Latte and CoffeeMaker. From Percolator Industries (!!), CoffeeMaker has the potential to be a powerful tool, despite the kitchy name. CoffeeMaker derives Java source programs from a description of Internet transactions. It can also read existing Java, C, and Windows source code. This means many wonderful things for programmers working with these languages in Internet applications. According to the announcement in the Java_Porting mail list: "Existing source materials in HTML, C, Java, can be read and manipulated... and CoffeeMaker is easily used to synthesize Java and C programs, as well as HTML scripts." Basically, it simplifies object-oriented programming and extends the capabilities of Java. It's not advised for the average homepage builder, but it could prove very useful for high-end tech types. Percolator also says we should expect more Java-related products and tools very soon. Percolator can be reached at **coffee@ixi.net**, or call 508 695 3783.

*— BG*

# Intuit Strives to Mirror PC Success Online

Intuit, the pioneer in creating a mass market for PC financial technologies, recently introduced a Web site, the Quicken Financial Network (**http://www.intuit.com/quicken**) in an effort to gain a strong online presence. Toward that end, it's also acquired GALT Technologies, a provider of up-to-the-minute mutual fund information over the net (**http://networth.galt.com**).

Intuit says it will include access to GALT's Mutual Fund Market Manager, which has information and prospectuses on 65 mutual fund companies, on its site. The purchase will let it provide the more than 10 million Quicken customers with "timely information to help them make smart investment decisions" from mutual fund distributors, insurance companies, and other financial institutions, the company predicts.

Intuit already has partnerships with 22 financial institutions to let customers do banking and pay bills online.

New versions of Quicken are expected to include an online service that provides customized information on stocks and mutual funds.

*— MS*

# Whole City Goes Cyber

**Before you can say "The Flinstones," the era of the access provider will have passed into what will be considered the Stone Age of the Internet.**

**Already, there's a multitude of ways to tap into the Internet. Depending upon where you live, there may be one that suits your needs better than a traditional method, such as a commercial online service.**

**If you're a resident of Glasgow, KY, which has a population of only 13,000, you can bypass AOL and CompuServe altogether, and receive unlimited Internet access at two megabits per second for a flat fee of $22 a month. Residents have their city's municipally owned electric utility to thank.**

**The Internet access represents only the latest in a host of telecommunications services offered by the local electric utility (also offered are cable television and a city-wide computer network). In 1988, the city spent $3 million on a broadband fiber network; by 1991, it realized that the network could be used to offer telephone service.**

**This prompted a city local area network, which reached beyond city confines when MCI installed a T1 line from Glasgow to the nearest Internet connection. Now, every new customer on the city's electric system has an Internet e-mail address.**

***— Barbara Bergesen***

# AOL's Europe Tour 96

Everyone has watched in awe as America Online's popularity rapidly soared. Not long ago, it seems, the company celebrated having hit the 1 million subscriber mark. Now, with more than 4 million subscribers, it's become the preferred way for people in the U.S. to go online. And AOL is now turning its sights to Europe.

Europe represents largely uncharted territory for the online business, and companies are scrambling to make sure they have a stake in it. According to *The New York Times*, 11 million customers around the globe subscribe to a commercial online service, and this number is expected to increase significantly in the next five years. In 1995, the online business increased in revenue by 30 percent, to $1.4 billion.

Late last year, AOL introduced "AOL in Germany," aimed, of course, at consumers in Germany. German subscribers have full access to the content offered on the U.S.-based AOL service, as well as to local German content and language. There's also a Web browser integrated into AOL in Germany, and full Internet access is provided as part of the regular monthly subscription fee. Versions of AOL for France and Britain are expected to be introduced in early 1996.

AOL has a huge jump-start on the competition, given its deep-pocketed and highly recognized partners. Joining AOL to form a European-wide interactive communications network are Bertelsmann A.G. and Axel Springer Verlag A.G. — two of Germany's largest publishers that are, incidentally, major competitors — and Deutsche Telekom A.G., the country's largest telecommunications company. Last March, Bertelsmann invested in AOL; it now holds a 5 percent stake in the company. Deutsche Telekom also intends to purchase a 5 percent share in AOL.

Competition for subscribers in this new territory include CompuServe's European operation and the Luxembourg-based Europe Online, whose intent is to create the only all-European online service. However, their main concern stems from the inevitable rivalry they will face from Microsoft. The Microsoft Network, bundled with Windows 95, has pulled in 500,000 American customers, but fewer than 75,000 abroad.

*— Barbara Bergesen*

# AOL Looks for Some New Ideas

O.K., everyone, put on your virtual thinking caps, because Opportunity has just knocked. And she's looking for a few good ideas.

America Online, in the true spirit of all that is American, has introduced the AOL Software Greenhouse. It's a "companion concept" to the AOL Greenhouse program, which was started last year to fund entrepreneurs interested in bringing new content to AOL. The Greenhouse program, which is still in existence, has been responsible for bringing to AOL "The eGG" (Electronic Gourmet Guide), NetNoir, and "The Motley Fool."

The AOL Software Greenhouse represents the same concept with a slight shift: It's a developer program aimed at helping emerging developers produce and market their software. AOL is pursuing small but established companies, start-ups, and entrepreneurs.

In addition, through the AOL Developers Studio, which houses the Software Greenhouse, AOL is offering assistance to large software companies in the creation of AOL-integrated applications. In this way, AOL can simultaneously seek out the next generation of software applications, while also creating liaisons with third party software developers to produce applications that run in harmony with AOL.

Participating companies can use the AOL Software Developers Kit to integrate options for Windows and Macintosh platforms. The kit allows companies to build ready access to AOL's information and network features into their products.

The Developers Studio represents a symbiotic relationship between software companies and AOL subscribers: Software companies can reach a potential audience of 4 million to view their products, and subscribers can preview products and occasionally try before they buy.

Check out products already integrated into the AOL environment with **Keyword: Developers Studio**.

*— Barbara Bergesen*

# Cautious Victory for Netcom

It all depends on the spin. After a November U.S. District judge ruling, a *Wall Street Journal* headline screamed: "Netcom Loses Copyright Fight in Federal Court." But Netcom, in a press release, called the judge's ruling a "major victory." The case in question involves the Church of Scientology and its efforts to file a lawsuit against the Internet access provider for not removing a subscriber's posting of text copyrighted by the Church.

Actually, it was more of a mixed victory for both Netcom and the Church. The judge ruled in favor of the company on two of three points under review: that Netcom isn't liable for direct copyright infringement when a subscriber posts copyrighted material without Netcom's knowledge, and that Netcom is also not liable for vicarious liability. In his ruling, the judge wrote that to hold Netcom or any access provider liable for direct infringement in this circumstance "would... result in liability for every single Usenet server in the worldwide link of computers transmitting [the infringing] message to every other computer." In addition, the company noted in its release, the court didn't grant the Church of Scientology's request for a preliminary injunction against Netcom.

The bad news for the company, and the good news for the Church, involved the third point in question, which had to do with what's called "contributory copyright infringement." The judge found that the court couldn't issue a grant of summary judgment in Netcom's favor. This means that the Church was granted the right to move forward with its suit. Netcom, which has the support of the Internet community behind it, is arguing that as a provider of direct access to the Internet, it does not post content, except for messages to subscribers about its services. Instead, it says, it's "a passive transmitter of millions of messages which are created worldwide and conveyed throughout the Internet every day."

John Perry Barlow, self-described "cognitive dissident" and co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, commented to *The Net* that he is "cautiously optimistic" about the ruling. "The judge seems to agree that Netscape should and could not have been responsible for perpetuating a copyright violation based on the technical operation of the system," he continued, adding that "as Mitch Kapor [the other founder of the EFF] says, copyright will become the Vietnam of cyberspace and this case is just the beginning." The Church of Scientology, meanwhile, is arguing that it is merely fighting for

its "First Amendment right of free religious exercise — as well as its rights under the copyright and trade secret laws."

To stay updated, check out this site, which takes a stance against the Church's actions: **http://www.cybercom.net/~rnewman/scientology/home.html**. To hear the Church of Scientology's side, visit **http://www.theta.com/relfreedom/**. Oddly, the Netcom ruling came shortly after Prodigy agreed to apologize to Stratton Oakmont, a securities firm. In exchange, Stratton dropped a libel suit, which had attempted to make Prodigy liable for the content of postings on its service.

*— MS*

# Quarterdeck Moves into Africa

While AOL firms up its European operations, Quarterdeck is focusing on Africa. It's signed a license granting the right to its Internet software access products to Internetworking Africa. That company will use the products for its dial-up service customers in the southern part of Africa. Internetworking Africa is South Africa's only national Internet service provider.

Quarterdeck's Internet suite includes a browser; the Quarterdeck Message Center; QTerm, for Telnetting; QFTP, for File Transfer Protocol; and Quarterdeck Location Manager.

For more information about Quarterdeck, visit the Web site at **http://www.qdeck.com/**.

*— MS*

# Prodigy Breeds a New Generation of Mall Rats

**Lately, as soon as the media dubs something new and exciting, it's already old news. Maybe you thought shopping online was pretty cool, even with all the glitches. Well, thanks to Prodigy and BroadVision, Inc., you can now experience a three-hour sale, bask in the comfort of a 30-day money-back guarantee, and let your personal sales assistant help you in your search, all online.**

**Introducing the Virtual Mall. It's the first use of BroadVision's One-to-One application system for marketing and selling. BroadVision, a Silicon Valley-based software developer, built the system with HTML, which is why you'll find that the Virtual Mall gives you a pretty authentic shopping experience. The application lets retailers place and remove information in the shopping center, such as a daily special, without taking the store off-line.**

**Personalized shopping profiles will be used to enhance the BroadVision One-To-One Personal Sales Assistant. The Assistant will link products and services according to the profiles.**

**The Virtual Mall will become available to the entire Internet community later this year.**

**For more information, call Prodigy at 800 PRODIGY, or visit the Web site at http://www.prodigy.com. Find BroadVision on the Web at http://www.broadvision.com.**

***— Barbara Bergesen***

# reviews

## ratings criteria

**Here's what we ask reviewers to keep in mind:**

The **"repeatability"** of the product, site, or book. In other words, is there a reason why you would want to revisit the site or book or product? This is closely related to the aesthetics and design of the product, and its worthiness — in terms of entertainment value, downloadable software, or ability to aid you in getting and staying online.

Quality of **construction**: Does the item pull us in, get us to use it, and keep us there? Is the content easily understandable?

Level and availability of **tech support**, if applicable. A potentially great piece of software loses points if its parent company can't be reached on the phone, or if it only services customers via a 900-number. Does the company that created the product or site offer online forums, e-mail, 800-numbers, and so forth?

The **price** factor is pretty self-explanatory: If something works so wonderfully that you shouldn't live without it, then price is less of a factor — as long as it's fair and comparable to other products in its class.

**Availability** comes into play when, for example, a software company offers free updates on a variety of online services the day they're announced.

A product's **instinctiveness**, whether it's a book, hardware assembly instructions, a Web site, or software. A product can look good — even absolutely dazzle you — but if it's too hard to figure out how to use, then it'll lose some points.

**Uniqueness** is important if the product is truly innovative, entertaining, or useful in a completely new way.

Here's something obvious: Does the product **work**? Beta products get a little leeway here, because betas are products under development.

**Brain-meat**: Does the thing being reviewed get us excited? Make us think? Cause us to take another step forward in our learning or evolution process? Does an online game challenge our mind as well as our fingers?

*If you've got a site, software, hardware, or book you'd like us to consider for review, send an e-mail to* **crystal@thenet-usa.com** *with information about it.*

## getting the grade

A High-five, baby.
B Good — and we mean it.
C Average. Not bad, but we've seen better.
D Could use lots of improvement.
F We'll wait til the next version.

# sitings

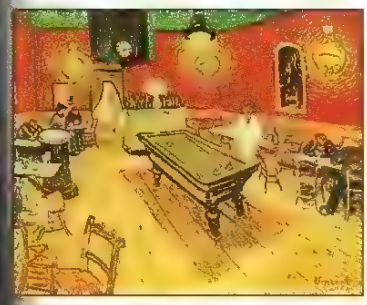
## arts

### Electronic Postcards

**http://postcards.www.media.mit.edu/Postcards/**

Have you got a burning message you want to send off to someone, but are weary of the boring, no-frills blandness of e-mail? The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, that mecca of all things digital, has a place for you — the electronic postcard store. As of October 1995, the postcard store had sent out almost 400,000 cards.

It's a fun project that definitely deserves a spot on your hotlist. When you want to send a postcard, you simple log on and peruse the archives of pictures, which ranges from fine arts masters — Picasso, Magritte, Monet — to famous U.S. postage stamps and abstract fractal designs. After you select an image, pick the lucky recipient, type a message (which could include hyperlinks), and you're off. The service will send e-mail to your friend and tell him/her how to get the postcard. Keep in mind, though, that the person to whom you are sending the postcard needs to have color Web access to pick it up.



**The Electronic Postcards site lets you send van Gogh to a friend far away.**

It's super-easy, there are lots of choices, and it's an all-around great idea. *The Net* has a similar greeting card rack (with pictures of the characters from our Web site) at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/nest/greet/greet.html**. **A**

*— BG*

### Robert Altman Communications

**http://www.cea.edu/robert/**

Any guy who has taken photos of Jim Morrison, Jerry Garcia, Groucho Marx, and Beaver Cleaver must be cool. Robert Altman, the photographer, not the film director, has a Web site loaded with pictures from his portfolio that span three decades. In his former career, Altman was the chief photographer for *Rolling Stone* magazine. His Web site showcases his best work from the *Rolling Stone* years, as he

captured everything from the psychedelic music revolution of the late 1960s to the political activism of a generation that refused to remain silent.

Although a good photo is worth a thousand words, Altman chooses to complement these stark portraits with interesting anecdotes. Read Groucho Marx's blunt description of his disgust for former President Nixon. Find out how hard it is to convince singer Bonnie Raitt to sit still for a snapshot. Other celeb mugshots

See Groucho Marx appearing sturdy and stoic in Robert Altman's photo archive.

on the site include those of Dennis Hopper, Caesar Chavez, Elton John, Mick Jagger, and Timothy Leary. Altman recently traded his photo lens for a digital camera, and teaches Web design at the Center for Electronic Art in San Francisco. This is one Web site suitable for framing. **A-**

*— Bonnie J. Burton*

## sports/fitness

### Cheerleader Homepage

**http://www.telepath.com/gdj1146/jenn/**

Everything, I mean everything, you'd ever want to know about cheerleading is here. I intended to poke fun at a site solely devoted to cheerleading, especially one so zealous. But after reading the purpose statement of Jen, the site's 16-year-old creator, I have no choice but to retreat and approach this site with the seriousness it deserves.

**CHEERLEADER HOMEPAGE**

**Cheerleaders have a friend in cyberspace. Let Jen show you the path to being a sublime cheerleader.**

Plain and simple, it's a great site for anyone interested in cheerleading. It's got tips for trying out, a list of jumps and cheers to practice, plus a compilation of national organizations (with 800-phone numbers) and details about cheerleading camps. There aren't a lot of heavy graphics (so, gawking testosterone-ridden boys, there's nothing to see here), just a smooth, simple layout that makes running through the pages quick and easy.

Jen's very specific about why she has put these pages up: she's hard-core into it. She also has a space where you can mail comments and opinions about the site, the sport, or whatever you feel needs to be commented on, which shows she's open to improvement and suggestions (and, of course, praise).

So, great job, Jen. My only qualm: Fix the visitor counter... **A**

*— BG*

### Dirt Rag

**http://cyclery.com/dirt_rag/index.html**

In what adds up to be little less than an Internet advertisement, Dirt Rag is the Web

Despite the spiffy cover image, this mountain biker magazine still needs to work on its Web site.

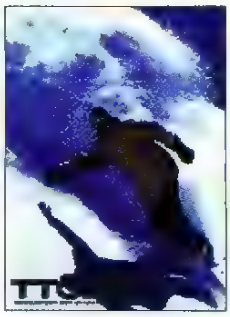
alias of a grassroots mountain bike magazine by the same name. For fans of the print version of *Dirt Rag*, there are some useful features here, including a list of back issues for order and an easy opportunity to subscribe. Those not familiar with the magazine, however, are not likely to get much from the Web site.

Basically, there's a bevy of quotes (all about the magazine), thumbnail descriptions of magazine articles, and a list of requirements for contributing to the magazine. There's also a list of relevant newsgroups, and a few short articles to browse through, but almost no pictures and very little substantive writing. In the end, there simply isn't much here for the mountain bike fan looking for real dirt on the Web. Perhaps in the future, some of the magic of the print magazine will begin to rub off on the Web site, but until then, keep your compass handy and your water bottle filled. **C+**

*— Patrick Baggatta*

### FlakeZine

**http://users.aol.com/flakezine/fzine.html**



FlakeZine may not tell you what a "duffy" is, but it'll point you to places that do.

If your idea of a good time is to strap yourself to a five-foot-long piece of fiberglass and rocket down snow-packed declines at mach five, take a peek at FlakeZine, an electronic zine that publishes monthly reviews of the latest lusts and busts of snowboard advertisers and advertising.

Yes, its sole purpose is to critique snowboard advertising. It offers a simple Web layout, hordes of text, and few graphics (although the ones they do have are pretty spiffy). It's not perfect, but it's been done well.

Don't be intimidated by all the snowboarding terms — "daffy," "riding the rail," or a "50-50." (Remember, the site was created by dizzy snowboarders feeling the effects of a 12,000-foot fall with limited oxygen.) The site is a satirical and often witty look not only at specific snowboarding advertisements, but also at advertising concepts as a whole. The writ-

## Acupuncture.Com

**http://www.acupuncture.com/acupuncture/**

Maybe you think acupuncture — a treatment in which needles are administered at specific points on the body — is too weird to take seriously, but check out the statistics page in the Acupuncture.Com site before you close your mind. You'll discover that scientific studies have shown acupuncture able to improve a whole slew of illnesses and conditions, including multiple sclerosis, insomnia, headaches, and lumbar disc syndrome.

I don't know what this Chinese calligraphy says, but its presence lends an air of authenticity to the site.

Even if you're not convinced, you might at least enjoy the Web site. It's elegant, with a gravely gray background that resembles raindrops and beautiful Chinese calligraphy illustrating many of the pages. And it does a fantastic job of organizing a vast amount of information, much of it educational and practical in nature.

For instance, you'll learn how Chinese herbs can help heal both large and small ailments, and why you should start drinking Kombucha mushroom tea and eating rhubarb. There's also info on the therapeutic qualities of your favorite foods (e.g., bananas clear toxins). And, you'll find many links to other alternative medicine pages.

All the articles are well-written and thorough, and there's a friendly atmosphere here that could make this non-Western approach to the body and health more palatable to the [illegible]. **A**

*— MS*

Soothing landscapes illuminated by a yin/yang moon illustrate Acupuncture.Com.

Flake Zine critiques snowboard advertising with a sharp tongue and knowing jargon.

ers do tend to ramble on their soap boxes about topical political issues, though.

FlakeZine has some great resources and just about every single outdoor winter sport site on the Web is linked there. But after reading all the FlakeZine volumes and taking a nap on the scrolldown button, FlakeZine seems about a 50-50. **B-**

*— Benjamin Kroll*

## Panic-Anxiety

**http://frank.mtsu.edu/~sward/anxiety/anxiety.html**

Calm down. Take it easy. Breathe. Everything's gonna be O.K. After all, feelings are distressing, NOT dangerous. Yes, miracles never cease, and yours truly, queen of built-up stress and panic attacks, has found an online answer to anxiety. Noodle's Panic-Anxiety page is a phenomenal collection of resources for the Type-A personalities in your life. Though I am considerably better (thank you for listening), anyone in need

You'll learn ways to take a deep breath and calm down at the Panic-Anxiety page.

of a quick fix of rational thought should poke around this site for a minute (or a few hours, if necessary).

First off, there are pages and pages of archived articles and theories about panic attacks, anxiety, and depression, backed up with pages and pages of medical info, tips for relaxing, and a mega list of places to find support (everything from newsgroups to local 12-step programs).

And, the site's not just for people like me. Those who take care of people like me, the caregivers and therapists of the world, could probably benefit from it, too. In fact, there's a discussion group, a suggestions area, and a hefty list of recommended books. Did I mention the server is swift and the layout is, actually, very calm and appealing? So, while the Panic-Anxiety Page may not be for everyone, it's amazing for its target audience.

And, remember: change "What If's" to "So What's." **A**

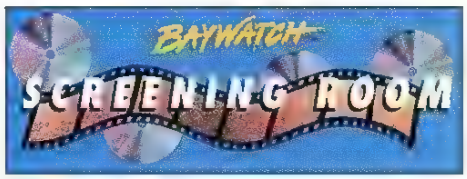
*— BG*

## entertainment

## BayWatch

**http://baywatch.compuserve.com/**

Now, in order to check out the Web site of the world's most popular television show (available in 140 countries!?!), I thought I




Here's where to get all the officially sanctioned "Bay Watch" clips you've been searching for.

should actually watch the show as preparation. This, as it turns out, was completely unnecessary. The BayWatch Web site provided all the background information I needed, and then some. It even included synopses of recent shows, so I was able to catch up on what happened last season.

The site opens with a graphic that had a hard time materializing, but then gets into the swing of things. With the attitude of a teen fan club magazine, the site provides actor profiles, discussion forums, character profiles, photos, and audio/video clips. Its design is simple if somewhat boring, but then again, we'd hate to stun the fans with originality.

Content aside, this messed-up graphic on the opening page is this Web site's only flaw.

While I was scared to check out the discussion forum, I did find the character profiles extremely revealing. Considering the scanty plot lines within the show,

**You can navigate around the BayWatch site using this cool surfboard.**

reading up about the characters was quite useful. I was surprised that all the female characters had their I.Q.'s listed as average or above. The show may be the world's most popular, but the Web site isn't. One good thing, though, is that after visiting this site, I'm ready to try my hand at the "BayWatch" pinball game. **C**

*— Keith Hart*

## The Boston Restaurant Guide
**http://www.hubnet.com/brg.html**

I've never been to Boston, but I can tell from the Boston Restaurant Guide that if/when I go, I'll at least enjoy the eating aspect of the trip. The reviews, which are short paragraphs providing a pretty quick summary, are supplemented by individual diners' comments. All who visit one of these restaurants can submit their good or bad experiences to the Web site. Of course, this democratic approach leaves open all sorts of opportunities for rival restaurateurs to sabotage a competitor's review.

Each restaurant is rated on a scale of one to 10 in the areas of value, service, food, and ambiance. The ratings seemed pretty generous to me, but maybe every

**The Boston Restaurant Guide needs to solve various technical problems that limits its usefulness.**

restaurant in Boston really rates a six or above. The reviews also employ a series of informative icons that are a little cryptic unless you read the legend. A search utility allows you to find restaurants by cuisine or name, and a map of the Boston area allows for searches based on location. It's a nice structure, but when I was there it, was buggy. Hopefully, they'll get all the search scripts fixed. **B+**

*— WKC*

## Hollywood Online
**http://www.hollywood.com**

Occasionally, when I get bored with all the critiquing I do, I take a break to explore the multimedia capabilities of my computer. I search for some new movie clip, so I can sit and be stunned by the moving pictures on my screen.

Finding movie clips on the Web can be pretty fun. I've stumbled across all sorts of interesting and bizarre sites that deserve a bookmark while running a search on *Apocalypse Now*, for example. But now I've found Hollywood Online. It's not a new

**Hollywood Online has all the really fun stuff, such as movie and sound clips, from major movies.**

online service for the stars, but a huge repository of multimedia fun. Hollywood Online has a pretty big index of current movies from many different genres and production companies. Under each film are six categories — Interactive, Videos, Photos, Sounds, Notes, and Trailers.

The Interactive section is probably my favorite. This is where the interactive press kits (IPKs) are kept for downloading. IPKs have evolved to a standard format — a graphic using various elements from the movie hides a few buttons that take you to cast notes, production notes, and usually some kind of game. Some IPKs are pretty innovative, though, and can provide months of entertainment. Screen savers are also kept in the Interactive section. The Trailers and Videos section are pretty much the same thing, except the trailers are usually longer and better edited.

Hollywood Online is also a good place to get extensive information on new movies, but reading a capsule review would be easier. **B+**

*— WKC*

## Spike Webb
**http://www.spikewebb.com**

Just as crossword puzzles found a natural home in magazines and newspapers, a new kind of word/clue game has been congealing into tangible form on the Web. Various kinds of Web treasure hunts have been fairly popular. Spike Webb combines this clue-type of game with a

## The Digital Restaurant Guide to San Francisco
**http://www.sf.net/lantern/**

One of the joys of living in San Francisco is the great food. I've heard a statistic that there's one restaurant per every 15 people in the city. Not a great ratio for the restaurants, but for residents, this means many choices. So many that it can be troublesome without some kind of guidance.

The Digital Restaurant Guide, with more than 3,000 restaurant reviews, is my top resource for getting the low-down on places in SF to eat. The guide is incredibly comprehensive, covering the range from five-star restaurants to the smallest cafés. The reviews seem fairly trustworthy because they come from sources not affiliated with the

**Comprehensive maps make this site a plus for both residents and tourists.**

restaurants. Aside from a paragraph describing restaurants, all reviews have ratings on a scale from one to five of atmosphere, food, and service. There's also an overall score.

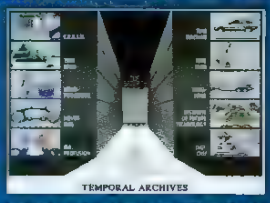
A small map icon leads you to the restaurant's approximate location in the city. If you click on the icon, a bigger map will load that shows the neighborhood and exact location of the restaurant, along with other area restaurants. Clicking on any restaurant on the map will cause its review to load. The map also has arrows along the borders that lead you to the next map. The detailed maps make this guide perfect for both tourists and residents. My only quibble is the lack of a search utility. **A**

*— WKC*

# Institute of Future Technology

http://www.mca.com/ituf/index.html

I have to admit, I was completely taken in by this Web site. The Institute of Future Technology (ITF) site is one of the slickest pieces of marketing I've seen. In an attempt to circumvent the usual self-promotion and cliché-ridden sales pitch, this site actually pretends it's real. No, it's not a government-funded think tank, but instead a window into the "Back To The Future" ride at Universal Studios Hollywood. You remember — Dr. Emmet Brown, the time-traveling DeLorean, and the meddling Biff Tannen, all from the immensely popular movie trilogy.



Indulge a fondness for "The Back to the Future" trilogy at this incredible archive on information.

Well, Dr. Brown is running the show over at ITF and you can take a guided tour. Be warned, though — the site is heavy on graphics, which means a lot of waiting time if you've got a 14.4 modem. Anything less and you'll fall asleep before the images load.

The success of the site relies on the user downloading large QuickTime movies to enjoy all the action. This tends to slow up the works even more. The story layer is thick enough to prevent even the most cynical viewer from falling off the road to the future. And, best of all, as I've known all along, it indicates that time travel is real. **A-**

*— Keith Hart*

This site provides lots of choices, allowing you to walk through on your own, or with a guide.

cyber fiction narrative (the look of Spike suggests cyber-beat instead of cyber-punk).

The story and Web site started in late September, and a new chapter is being added every week. Spike Webb is an accidentally created artificial intelligence that lives on computer networks and is kind of the ultimate hacker. In the premier story, Spike Webb picks a sys admin, named Nancy McGill, with whom to team up. She's chosen because she is "an excellent systems engineer with an applied bent to [her] work." So far ,we've got all the elements for male computer-geek fantasy.

The "action," which involves tracking a trace route left by a network probe, and the use of heavy terminology, such as X.12 EDI layout files, would seem to identify the

The cyberbeat style is cool, but that's all this site has to offer.

market audience as serious code heads. While all that's forgivable, the simplistic writing style isn't.

But the story isn't the entire focus of Spike Webb. Certain letters throughout the text have been designated links. These letters are supposed to provide clues to a puzzle. If you solve all the puzzles in chapters three through eight, you could win a T-shirt. It's not enough motivation for me, but the puzzle-inclined might appreciate the challenge. **C+**

*— WKC*

## Word

**http://www.word.com/**

Heads up, everybody, Word is an absolute must-see Web production. No, don't bother reading this, just turn on your computer, connect to the Internet in your accustomed style, and point your browser to the above address. (It will help if you're using a Netscape browser). O.K., maybe you're reading this on the train or something and can't immediately get to your computer, so I'll tell you a bit about it.

Word is a Web magazine full of humorous/informative/graphically intense articles. But the people behind it understand the Web, and have designed the graphics so they're not too burdensome on all those 14.4k connections out there. A lot of the pages employ server push scripts to make for some neat animations, but nothing seemed too heavy to me.

The tone of the articles is probably going to appeal to the slackerX, aged 20-35 generation more than anyone else. The issue of Word that I went through had a story called "Cocktail Hour," by Phil James, that consists of a kid's reflections on his parent's cocktail parties. The narrator recalls the complex drinks his dad made, and how his parents eventually stopped having the parties. The ending is kind of ironic and sad. I'm sure a lot of socio-political commentary could be interpreted from it, but that all seems secondary to the story's art.

Other stories I found in Word include "Yankee Inventors," a strange fiction about early industrial inventions, and "The Stevie Nicks Experience," a confes-

This graphic from the story "Cocktail Hour" in Word also serves as a navigation aid.

# HoT Stuff, Indeed!

—*PC Magazine*
"Editors' Choice" October 10, 1995

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## software.net

**http://www.software.net/**

In the old days, to be the first kid on the block with the latest software packages, the hardcore computer hacker would have to let the screensaver take over while s/he made a trip to the local computer superstore. It was convenient because you could also stock up on soda and chips while you were there, and gaze longingly at those four megabyte simms with thoughts of a RAM upgrade. But now, with the expansion of the Internet, there's really no time for these trips into the real world when you could be exploring online Russia. Fortunately, software.net has stepped in to make shopping for software desktop accessible.

Software.net is a really well put-together virtual store, with in excess of 8,400 products for Windows, DOS, Mac, OS/2, and Unix. The homepage features an image map that bunches all the hot products together in that more-information-than-we-can-fit style favored by publications like *Computer Currents* and *Microtimes*. Clicking on a product takes you right to its listing, or there's a general software index organized by operating system. The homepage also features a hotlink to all the Internet-related software. Each software listing also incorporates a link to its review on CMP's TechWeb (http://techweb.cmp.com/), allowing a little independent reference. The best thing about software.net is that the site supports complete online ordering. And, the designers have taken this a step further with electronic delivery of certain products. Instead of paying and waiting, software.net will allow you to download the software immediately. **A-**

*— WKC*

How to cram as many products in a small space is the lesson of software.net's homepage graphic.

sion from a late-comer Stevie Nicks fan. And, don't forget to read the letter from the editor in the information section — its rambling commentary sets the stage for all of Word. You must have found your way to a computer by now, so read the rest of *The Net* later. Read Word now. **A+**

*— WKC*

## commerce

### CDNow!

**http://www.cdnow.com/**

Since my very first days on the Web I've been going to CDNow! to shop for records. Not that buying has always been part of the picture; sometimes I just need to research an artist or a song, and the CDNow! database seems to cover all the bases.

It has a very broad range of music, and probably one of the best features about the site is the accompanying All Music Guide. Not only can I find the disc I'm looking for, but if it's been covered in the All Music Guide, there will be a review just a mouse-click away. This is especially useful when I look up the discography of an artist like Duke Ellington, who's put out about a bazillion records. The Guide gives some information to help me narrow my choices.

The central utility of CDNow! is the search form. If there's a song I heard once on the radio, I can make a guess as to the title and try to find it online. CDNow! has other good features, such as The Lexicon — an index of all the music in the database categorized by type, which involves a lot of linking down through genres and sub-genres to get to the actual music. Another section lists all the CDs on sale for budget shoppers. CDNow! also carries cassettes, videos, and some vinyl. **A**

*— WKC*

CDNow makes a pretty good case for being biggest and fastest.

### E Music

**http://www.emusic.com/**

So far, I've been pretty impressed with online record stores, not only as a method for picking up CDs that cost a few dollars less than they do in a real store, but also as sources of general music information. But I guess I just got lucky and found some good stores.

If I'd started off with E Music, I wouldn't have had nearly so much fun. E Music has inferior graphics to CDNow! (see previous review) and Music Boulevard (**http://www.musicblvd.com/**), my two favorite online CD stores. This might not be a bad thing if you have a low bandwidth connection and don't usually bother with images anyway. But the inexcusable part is E Music's limited selection and higher prices. In the real world, record stores can get away with this if they've got a good location, but location doesn't count online.

E Music has the necessary search field at the top of each screen, which is good if you suddenly remember a song title or artist you want to look up. Besides the search capability, there are New Releases and Top Sellers sections. Top Sellers is kind of annoying because all the information is on one page. The organization is kind of bizarre, with a section for Hawaiian music along with Jazz, Rap, Heavy Metal, etc. Weird. **D**

Better selection and prices are just an URL away, so there's little reason to shop at E Music.

*— WKC*

### InsWeb

**http://www.insweb.com/default.htm**

Insurance is a pretty dry subject, or so I thought until I visited this site. What I found was truly one of the prettiest and best-designed sites I've ever seen. Really. And the tone and approach is far from pedantic.

The site has two parts to it. One is oriented toward consumers looking for an insurance policy or seeking information about insurance companies. There's lots of good background data if you don't

know the first thing about auto, life, and/or health insurance (e.g., the total cost of unintentional injuries in 1994 totaled $440.9 billion). But if you do know what type of coverage you want, you can search the Insurance Company Listing

**InsWeb uses attractive graphics and lots of image maps to organize its selections and data.**

pages for a company that offers just that and even buy insurance products on the site. There's also an Agent Locator service that lets you look for an agent in your area. When I checked, quotes for different types of insurance (personal, business, and professional) weren't available yet, but they should be by now.

The other part of the site is for professionals working in the insurance industry. For them, there's news and info, a set of company homepages and reference materials, a Career Center that lists employment opportunities, and more.

Best of all, this promises to be a free service. Even if you're not shopping for an insurance policy, check it out to see a well-designed and organized site. **A**

*— MS*

## Universal Entertainment Videos

**http://www.dva.com/welcome.html**

I love movies, and I've had a lot of fun going through a CD-ROM movie database looking up movies by director, actor, and genre. Of course, I've never gotten into collecting movies, partly because videotapes take up a lot of shelf space and they're kind of expensive to justify my once-a-year viewing schedule. Still, there are rarities that I can never seem to find in the rental shop. So, I was pretty excited when I came across this site; I guess I expected it to be an extensive resource for video rentals. Unfortunately, Universal Entertainment Videos didn't quite fulfill my desires.

The homepage has links to the genres it carries — Action, Comedy, Horror, Disney, and Miscellaneous. Notice any holes here? The design is pretty cool, with planets representing each of the genres floating on a starry background, and once you click on the Comedy planet, the linking page informs you that this is actually the Comedy and Drama area, so the categories aren't quite as narrow as they initially seemed.

Each genre area, though, just has one long list of available movies; you won't get any further information about a movie by clicking on its title. In fact, the titles aren't linked at all. Each title has both a new and

**These attractive graphics belie poorly organized content with an inconvenient ordering method.**

used price next to it; they can be pretty cheap. So getting a movie through Universal Entertainment could be a good value if you know what you want. But e-mail is as close to online ordering as it gets. **C**

*— WKC*

## WarnerActive

**http://www.warneractive.com/**

You'd think a division of a major publisher, the company that brought Pathfinder to life, would have pulled out all the stops on its Web site. Maybe it's just another example of corporate malaise, but this is a game site! Game sites should be pretty radical — hitting the limits of imagination, exploiting the new worlds of multimedia.

Well, the WarnerActive site is relatively new; it may get developed further.

**When I visited, the WarnerActive site had a ways to go in terms of content, pizazz, and style.**

The purpose of the site is to market CD-ROM games, WarnerActive's products. As such, it's primarily an umbrella site for various individual game pages that reflect the character of the games. The fact that there were only four games when I was there may have been part of the problem. But the truth is, with movie, music, and game sites, I like to see the company distributing products sit quietly in the background and let the site focus on the creative content of the products.

I know there's a lot of potential for the WarnerActive site because I got to play *Where's Waldo* there. The pages for *Where's Waldo at the Circus* seemed to be the most developed, and had an actual online version (don't worry, more adult-oriented games are also available there). Most games also have demos that can be downloaded, which is a pretty good way to preview a CD-ROM. My final critique, which I end up leveling at a lot of sites, is that WarnerActive has no online ordering. Come on, people, the technology is there to make it secure, let's give it a chance. **B-**

*— WKC*

# corporate

## Columbia/HCA Home Page

**http://www.columbia-hca.com/**

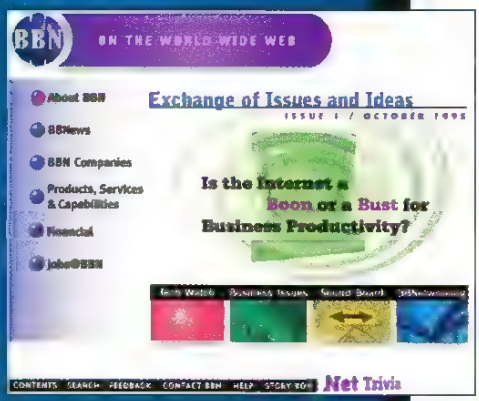
When I got a press release informing me about this site, I wasn't sure what to expect. But one thing I knew for sure: this $17 billion health care company, which has been an aggressive buyer of hospitals and health facilities, should have plenty to spend on a Web site.

The result is decent enough, but nothing to write home about. It's clean, organized, and easy to navigate (although some buttons have a hokey, homemade look). And there's a number of good patient-oriented materials. Most impressive is an opportunity for visitors to receive a free, confidential drug therapy analysis from Columbia's clinical pharmacists. There's also some very brief suggestions on how to live healthfully, and comprehensive articles about various health issues. Locations are also listed for chapters of Senior Friends, a non-profit association providing services and activities for the elderly.

## BBN Planet

**http://www.bbn.com/**

O.K., kids, it's time for the corporate site of the month, so put your heads down on your desks, close your eyes, and dream little capitalist dreams while I tell you this story. Actually, if you work for a company that makes its money by impressing people with its serious image, you might want to take notes from BBN's Web site. BBN is in the business of setting up big networks with and without Internet connectivity, so it's got to have a good Web site just for the sake of credibility.




Corporate sites don't have to suck. Take a lesson from the folks at BBN Planet.

The opening page image map has the standard corporate areas (they must have this stuff on a template), such as info about the company, its products and services, and job listings. The icons for these are pushed off neatly to the side, so they don't get in the way. When I was perusing the site there was a feature article titled, "Is the Internet a Boon or a Bust for Business Productivity?" It turned out not to be a BBN-authored piece offering advice on how a corporation can improve its productivity through use of the Internet.

The site comes off as a BBN newsletter for the world, and the material here is pretty interesting, even if you're not a BBN client or employee. But the really worthwhile feature of the BBN site is its trivia game. There aren't any prizes, but there's a nice congratulations when you give a correct answer. B

— WKC

But mostly there's corporate info, and loads of it. You'll find a personal audio greeting from the company's CEO, slides from a presentation to investors, an image map leading you to state-by-state lists of Columbia's health care facilities, and an archive of press releases. A corporate site wouldn't be complete without a

contest area, and Columbia doesn't disappoint, although it was just getting this area going when I visited.

Overall, the site manages to do a good job at simultaneously providing service to visitors while touting its wares. B-

— MS

## The Travel Channel Online Network

**http://www.travelchannel.com/**

I've never really liked travel writing. Maybe I've just been unlucky in the articles I've come across, but most rely on an abuse of trite, adjective-enhanced phrases, like "the sea was a sparkling azure." Plus, reading about interesting and exotic locales always makes me yearn to go there, but it's never so simple to just run off to Malaysia, for example.

The Travel Channel Online Network is sort of the uber-travel article repository, and it's got a section called Spotlight where a new destination is featured every week. Fortunately, the Spotlight section focuses as much on tips about coping with a location as it does with the didn't-we-have-such-a-wonderful-vacation kind of writing. Egypt was the destination of the week when I was there, and it included sections on tipping and the local police. The Travel Channel part of the site made itself known with a listing of all the programs running on the cable network.

Another section, called Facts & Opinions, was a loose collection of travel articles and newsletters by various authors. I found one here that I really liked. About a trip to Oshkosh, WI for an air show, it was written up like a journal entry and used a minimum of adjectives. The Photo section is set up in the true democratic spirit of the Internet, with an open invitation for people to send in their vacation photos and have them put up on the site. B+

— WKC

Exploring the world from your desktop might not be as satisfying as real-life travel, but it's cheaper.

## finance

## TIPnet

**http://www.tipnet.com/**

Say you're new at the investing game, and want to make some smart and profitable moves. How do you start out? Increasingly, the net is offering some good choices for stock market newcomers. One is TIPnet, a service provided by Telescan, Inc., which makes investment software and online databases.

This is a site that's sophisticated in design but very easy to use. Basically, it's a database with information on 77,000+ stocks, mutual funds, bonds, options, futures, commodities, and industry groups. It even contains historical price and volume information dating back to 1973. You're also offered online quotes on securities listed on the New York, American, NASDAQ, and Canadian exchanges, as well as on the Futures and Options markets. There are good search tools to help you if you've forgotten a company's stock symbol or want to do some research.

But this information isn't free. There's a scale of monthly charges. For current and historical quotes, news, company facts, and the like, you have to pay $9.95; for all this plus stock graphs and

Includes playable demos of Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally, Slam 'n' Jam and NFL Quarterback Club!

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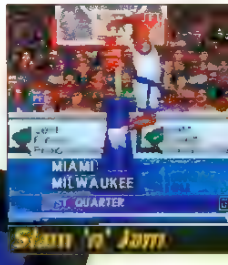



# NEXT GENERATION

Sega Saturn Special

# Esperanto Homepage

**http://www.tios.cs.utwente.nl/esperanto/**

[redacted], I admit it: I speak Esperanto. The confession alone is enough to make potential dates edge warily away from me at cocktail parties... for what sort of idealistic, out-of-touch nerd would want to speak a dead language like Esperanto?

"But hold on there," I usually say as I hasten after them, spilling my drink and tripping over more sophisticated partygoers — they probably speak some wuss language like French!. "Don't you know that the International Language is alive and well? You can even take a course in it on" (pause for effect) "the Internet."

Just in case the HyperCard version wasn't slow enough for you, the Esperanto Course is now available on the World Wide Web.

Axel Belinfante, a well-known Esperantist living in The Netherlands, has pulled together resources that were far-flung before the advent of the World Wide Web and put them in one convenient (albeit unattractive) site. Its centerpiece is the seven-lesson course in the language (in either English or Dutch), which will take you all the way from "Hello" up to "The cat is on the floor, isn't it?," and other handy tourist phrases. Beware, though: besides being somewhat unattractive, the site can be dog-slow. And since the lessons use quite a few graphics, going through the entire course can be an exercise in tedium. But, there's lots of other cool stuff here, like the words to the International Language's (national?) anthem. Sing it at your next party. Who knows? You might pick up dates. **C+**

*— Tom Geller*

**TIPnet offers lots of research services to the would-be investor, but at a price.**

keyword searching of news, you pay $19.95; and for $34.95 a month, you also get valuation reports, SEC reports, and a few other specialties. You can send in your credit card information two different ways: one using Netscape's browser, the other using Netcom, Spry Mosaic, America Online, or Prodigy browsers. The information is secured using SSL security.

If you're curious as to whether this will really benefit you, check out the Logon as a Guest section. You can discover the best and worst stocks of the day, view a market snapshot, and more. That's a nice touch. **A-**

*— MS*

## education

### Cells Alive

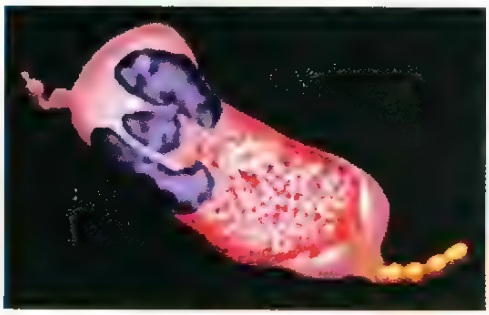
**http://www.comet.chv.va.us/quill/**

How do white blood cells kill microbes? What is "cell suicide"? What does Cryptosporidium look like? Science fans, look out, this is fantastic. Cells Alive is a multimedia art/education project brought to the Web via Quill Graphics — a company that says it "provides scientific imaging support to institutional and corporate clients."

The site is used to show how Quill can take an ordinary cell and jazz it up with photography, video, and illustrating tools to help people learn and make sense of the microscopic world. Cells Alive sports a clean, easy-to-read layout. The actual photographs, while not completely captivating, are very, very interesting. Mostly, though, I like the written descriptions of what is happening in each picture — they're short and easy to understand, despite all the upper-division, multi-syllable words.

Overall, the site is neither huge nor revolutionary, but it's fun, interesting, and I learned a lot! Cells Alive would help out any wired science classroom, so teachers, take note. And, after all, this is a sort of advertisement for what they do at Quill, so if you or your company needs scientific imaging support, visit ASAP. **B+**

*— BG*



**Cyrtosporidium never looked so appealing. There are great graphics at Cells Alive.**

## lifestyles

### Geekgirl

**http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/geekgirl/**

Why should girls play with dolls and learn to bake cookies when there's shiny new modems to tinker with, and bulletin board systems to begin? Geekgirl is for cyberchicks who want to share ideas and concepts in a forum that celebrates an estrogen-saturated Internet.

**Nevermind your cybermanners; Geekgirl is in your face with all things girl- and technology-related.**

With three issues already under its belt, this Australian cyberfeminist site is one of the best computer culture zines to smack the net in the face. Read about the first cyberfeminist, Dr. Sadie Plant. Cast a spell with the Electronic Witches. Go modem shopping with Sandra Davey. Or listen to the all-girl techno tunes of BIFTEK. Buzz buzz gossip — find out why writer Kathy Acker was kicked off America Online without warning.

**It Came From Jupiter!!!**

# CONSUMER ONLINE SERVICES 3

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*— Bonnie J. Burton*

## SeniorCom

**http://www.senior.com/**

The Internet isn't just dedicated only to 20- and 30-something hot-rod hipsters with modems, or 40- to 50-something business executives with international schedules to plan. There's plenty out there for the over-65 group. In fact, the Internet has become a very accessible way for people who have limited mobility due to aging to communicate with friends and family far away.

SeniorCom is an organization designed to help create a senior-friendly cyberspace. Visit the town square and feast on an array of resources, complete with the ubiquitous newsstand, shopping mall, and travel resources found in most virtual "communities." Unfortunately, a site whose mission is to address the needs of seniors should probably be a little more senior-specific. In the newsstand, only one of six magazines is specifically for the retired community. But the site is still under construction and as more pertinent content arrives online, the links at

**Visit the main square to navigate through Senior. Com's resources for senior citizens.**

SeniorCom will probably improve.

There are some very nice features, like the Professional Services section, which links and organizes resources for legal guidance and financial planning. The Public Service section is a valuable list of non-profits and government agencies that offer services and support for senior citizens. Overall, SeniorCom is trying hard to live up to its mission, and within the year, it will probably be a great jumping point for seniors. Considering there are only a few other senior-specific sites right now, I guess this one might be the best available. **B-**

*— BG*

# politics

## George Magazine

**http://www.georgemag.com/**

Celebrating the "inaugural" issue of

**What would George Washington have to say about his face on the cover of a hipster political zine?**

*George*, a print magazine created by John F. Kennedy Jr., George the Web site is more than a fluffy teaser for the newsstand crowd. Its creators have taken the opportunity to do something not so easily handled in print form: provide interactivity. With features such as a weekly poll, political trivia quizzes (my best was three out of five in the "Who Said It" category), and Virtual Politics (a general guide to all things government-related), this site is meant to engage the viewer and turn him/her into a participant.

For the most part, George carries itself with enough dignity to be considered a serious political advisor and public forum. There is, however, no doubt that its target audience is not the stodgy denizens of politics past, but a youthful group of weekend revolutionaries and liberal enthusiasts. (This is demonstrated by the feature in which Madonna, described as "political virgin," reveals what she would do if she were ever to become commander in chief.) Nonetheless, there's plenty of valuable information for the politically naive, such as the Find Your Rep feature that not only names Senators and Representatives from the state of your choice, but also gives you their addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail listings.

If you followed the last presidential campaign on MTV, then you've just found a new friend in cyberspace. Even if you didn't you're bound to be impressed by the effort. **A**

*— Patrick Baggatta*

# web technology

## Writing HTML

**http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/**

Want to build a homepage? Writing HTML is an online tutorial that tries to get you through the basics of creating a Web site without a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor. Yup, it'll teach you how to code.

As a Web site itself, Writing HTML is well-organized and easy to read. It starts with some background info, telling you what an Internet Service Provider is and explaining the concept of HTML programming. Then, it's on to code.

**Writing HTML won't make you an expert, but it will teach you the basics of building a solid homepage.**

Learn how to make headings, add inline images, create links, and build lists. Each section comes with definitions, demonstrations, and independent-practice problems. Although the sections for advanced features, like tables, alignment, forms, and Netscape extensions, aren't finished yet, the folks who created the tutorial have included links to other pages that do have advanced feature information.

So, if you are new to the World Wide Web and want to learn how people create the pages they do, this is a good place to start. **A-**

*— BG*

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# software

## DWANGO

***Manufacturer*: DWANGO**
***Platform*: DOS on a PC**
***Contact*: 713 467 0405 or http://www.dwango.com**
***Price*: $7.95/month for 5 hours; additional time at $19.95 for 10 hours, $34.95 for 20 hours, and $59.95 for 40 hours**

I've played *Doom II*, I've played *Heretic*, and I've played *Terminal Velocity*. After making it through about seven or eight levels of *Doom*, I can't help but get a little bit tired of the seemingly endless task of blowing away monster after monster by figuring out the right weapon to use. And all that running around looking for the colored passkeys. Sure, each level has its own traps, and the action is still pretty exciting, but the real reason for *Doom*'s popularity is network play — the ability to have human opponents who are much more unpredictable than a computer.

**The DWANGO lobby looks boring, but it'll lead you to online video game excitement.**

Since most people don't happen to have a home network, DWANGO has set up servers in more than 20 cities where anyone with the DWANGO (Dial-Up Wide Area Network Gaming Operation) client software, a copy of any of the supported games, and a modem can dial in and play against and with people from all over. At the time of this review, DWANGO supported *Doom*, *Terminal Velocity*, *Heretic*, and *Hexen*, although it plans to add about 10-15 more games. The most popular servers, and hence, the most players, are located in Dallas (which has an 800 number), Houston, and San Jose. According to Hoopster, a player on the San Jose server, the games don't run as fast as they do on a solo computer, but it's way better than the local Bulletin Board Systems.

The client software that you need to dial in to DWANGO isn't very smooth. It's a DOS program, with all the clunkiness this implies. My main gripe is that whenever you want to change any aspect of the configuration, like modem type, you have to reset the entire configuration. Hopefully, later versions will run a little more smoothly.

Once you dial in through the client software, you get to hang out in the lobby, which is free time. The lobby is basically a chat room where you form teams to go and play the supported games. It's a pretty wild place, with teams coming back all pumped up from playing *Doom*. Depending on the game, you can choose tournament play, where you try to kill other players, or cooperative play, where a team goes in and tries to reach whatever objective is set up in the game. The best thing about DWANGO is that it makes computer game play a social exercise. The worst thing is that it's easy to spend too much time on it. Hoopster had racked up 196 hours in one month. **B**

*— WKC*

## Internet In A Box For Kids

***Manufacturer*: Spry/CompuServe**
***Platform*: Windows (Macintosh version available spring 1996)**
***Contact*: 800 557 9614**
***Costs*: $29.95 software; $4.95/month for 3 hours, $1.95 each additional hour; $9.95/month for 7 hours, $1.95 each additional hour; $19.95/month for 20 hours, $1.95 each additional hour**

Finally, companies are noticing that the Internet is widely uncharted territory as far as kids go, and that kids are probably the ones who could gain the most from emerging technologies. Spry and CompuServe have put together a package aimed specifically at kids between the ages of eight and 14 to help them learn about technology, exchange ideas, and have kid-safe cyberspace.

I tested a beta version of the software, and ran into a few glitches. While the log-on process was simple to configure, I found it extremely difficult to establish and maintain a connection. The CompuServe PPP dialer was its usual quirky self. Once you "make contact," the product will launch you out to a Web site (**http://freezone.com**) via Spry Mosaic. All of the content for kids is located on the Web and is accessible through a user name and password model. The content is good, too. There's news, places to visit, facts, games, help, and info about sports, hobbies, and other things of interest to kids. This is sure to be entertaining, educational, and useful for hours (better select the $19.95 price model).

What CompuServe and Spry haven't created themselves, they've linked to. The layout and graphics are superb, though unfortunately, they look ridiculous when viewed through Mosaic (the browser bundled with the package). I suggest you run the program with Netscape Navigator instead; just download it for free at **http://home.netscape.com**. The package also comes with SurfWatch (reviewed in *The Net* Jan. 96, page 36), a program to help parents maintain some control over what their children see and do online. SurfWatch is one of the better censorship tools because it's easy to configure, fairly accurate, and does not require a reboot if "dangerous" material is found. It simply dumps kids back into the Freezone Web site. The first version of the software has a prefabricated list of sites and words to avoid, but future versions will allow parents to have greater control in creating block-out areas.

So, overall, this package is good, despite the initial set-up problems I encountered. *Internet In A Box For Kids* may be a worthwhile investment for parents who want their children to be able to enjoy the Internet. **B**

**CompuServe and Spry want a kid-safe cyberspace — they're off to a good start.**

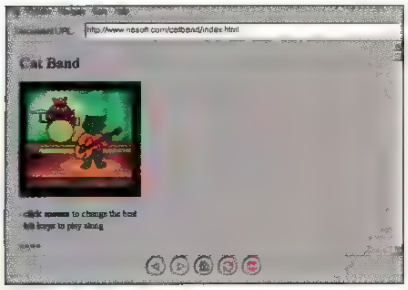
*— BG*

## HotJava 1.0 Alpha3 for Windows

***Manufacturer*: Sun Microsystems**
***Platform*: Windows 95 or**

**Windows NT**
***Contact*: ftp://java.sun.com/pub/hotjava-alpha3-win32-x86.exe**
***Price*: Alpha test copies are free**

Hopefully, by now we've gotten you all hyped up on Java (see "The Changing Face of Interspace" in *The Net* Jan. 96, pages 44-51). But you may be asking yourself, "How do I get to use this wonderful new technology?" The most reliable way is to go to the source and download an evaluation copy of the HotJava browser from Sun Microsystems. Although, as of this review, it's still in alpha test mode, it's a pretty solid program.




**JAVA developers are having all sorts of fun programming things like this animated Cat Band.**

It does require a 32-bit operating system, which means you'll have to run it under Windows 95 or Windows NT. And it wouldn't be a good idea to toss out your current browser and just use HotJava. While Sun claims that it supports most Netscape extensions, it doesn't have backgrounds and image alignment, the things that make the Web look so good. HotJava does have the basic browser controls, such as forward, backward, stop, and reload, and the graphic design of the buttons is pretty nice.

But standard Web pages aren't really what HotJava is all about. Getting to a page with a Java applet is the coolest thing in the world for the sheer novelty of it. The entire Web experience is enhanced about 3,000 percent when you browse a page with Java and get some little animated character bopping around, complete with real-time sound. I browsed through just about every Java page from Sun's list once I got HotJava running, and the things I was getting thrilled about were *MineSweeper* games and an animated all-cat band. At some point, somebody reminded my that *MineSweeper* comes standard with Windows, but I couldn't be shaken from my fascination with playing it on a Web page. **B**

*— WKC*

## Internet Pipeline

***Manufacturer*: Quantum Leap Technologies**
***Platform*: Mac/Windows CD-ROM**
***Contact*: 800 762 2877, 305 446 4141, or info@qltech.com**
***Price*: $35 U.S.**

Yikes. This CD is packed. In most cases, more does not necessarily equal better, but here we have a situation in which "more" is MORE than I'd ever imagined on one CD-ROM, and that makes it better in my eyes.

There is so much here I can hardly stand it. The "readme" file says "InterNet Pipeline™1.0 is one of the most useful Macintosh communication software collections ever assembled on a CD-ROM," and this seems to be a true statement. There's software to get you on the major online services; dial-up info for major bulletin board systems; multiple browsers for the Web and Gopher; Telnet, IRC, and FTP clients; and a bazillion different communications programs to help maximize your modem. Add to it online tutorials, reference manuals, the ever-annoying smiley dictionary, and prefabricated hotlists of Web sites, and we're cruising at Mach 5. And that's just the beginning.

**Besides a slew of net-savvy software, Internet Pipeline comes with the online game, *Outland*.**

While most of the offerings on the disc are freely available on the Internet or commercial online services, rarely have they all been assembled in one neat little package, which will literally save you hours of download time. It's a great pack for new users and has enough advanced programs to keep diehard tech freaks interested, at least for a while.

Mac users may find it a little easier to navigate through the archives, but that's more the nature of the Mac than of the disc, which works well on both platforms. Just drop the CD in the disc drive and start clicking. Read the "readme" file, though; it'll help make sense of the overall organization.

So, if you are looking for a whole slew of Internet apps to get you cruising and using cyberspace to its potential, give this a try. **A**

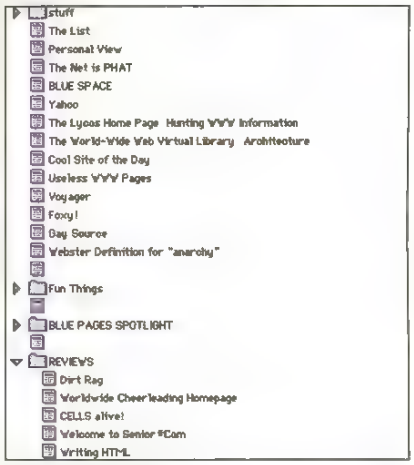
*— BG*

## Netscape Navigator 2.0

***Manufacturer*: Netscape Communications**
***Platform*: Mac/Windows**
***Contact*: download at http://home.netscape.com or ftp://ftp.netscape.com**
***Cost*: Freeware**

The world waited with bated breath for the release of the World Wide Web browser Netscape Navigator 2.0. It's arrived, safe and sound, and is probably already on millions of hard drives across the planet as you read this.

Navigator 2.0 is much the same in look and feel as previous versions, though the bookmark file organization has been significantly improved. This is nice. Gone are the days when you had to highlight a bookmark at the bottom of your list and then click, click, click on the arrow icons just to move it. Navigator now has a little drag-and-drop action, which is much appreciated by anyone with a large




**Finally, Netscape's latest generation makes bookmarks easier to navigate.**

hotlist. But much more exciting than the bookmark improvement is Navigators's new plug-in architecture, which makes it possible for companies like Adobe, Apple, and Sun Microsystems to add their helper applications (Adobe Acrobat, Apple QuickTime, and Sun's Hot Java, respectively) into the Navigator code. Now, users no longer have to launch their own helper applications every time they want to see a Java applet, an Adobe PDF file, or a 3D VRML world. Just download the application once, and it plugs into Navigator for future use. Brilliant.

Navigator is still a buggy and often unwieldy creature, though. It hordes memory (even though the plug-in architecture is supposed to relieve the system a bit) and it crashes with alarming consistency (especially the Win95 version). But, considering the options — NCSA's Mosaic, WinWeb, or MacWeb — Navigator (bugs and all) is by far the best choice available, and the enhancements found in 2.0 get a huge thumbs-up from me. Its convenience far outweighs the annoyance factor. **A-**

*— BG*

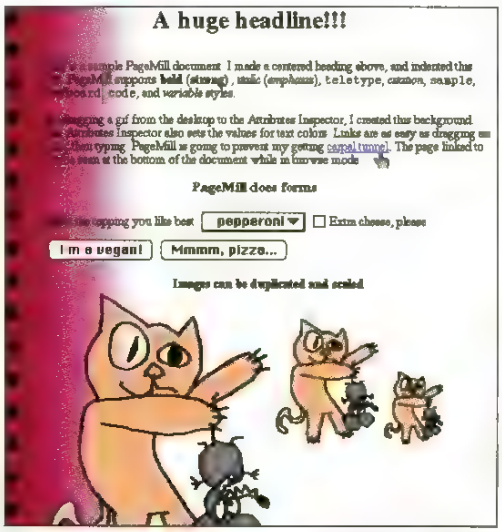
## PageMill

***Manufacturer*: Adobe Systems**
***Platform*: Macintosh**
***Contact*: 800 411 8657, or http://www.adobe.com/Apps/PageMill/**
***Price*: $99.00 U.S. until the end of January; later price not available at press time**

Last month, I wrote that I use a text editor to create *The Net*'s Web site because of shortcomings I've found with WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editors (*The Net* 01, page 37). It's not that I wanted to insult the cadre of shareware authors who wrote the initial crop of HTML editors; without such pioneering souls, the Internet wouldn't be what it is today. However, I've found such editors to be extremely limited: too many windows providing too few features, plus they're clunky and unintuitive, and the interface sucks.

But PageMill has changed my opinion of WYSIWYG editors. Simply put, PageMill is elegant. One of its authors was a human interface guru at Apple's Advanced Technology Group, and his background shows. PageMill takes full advantage of the Mac OS; it uses Macintosh drag-and-drop to reference external files. Want a background? Drag an image file from the Finder onto the page attributes and it's there. Want an inline image? Drag a PICT file onto PageMill and the program will convert it to a GIF file and insert it in your text.

Hypertext links are made by dragging icons from one page to another. All the elements can be dragged around the




**PageMill's user interface enables quick editing of Web pages.**

document and placed anywhere; each element has attributes that can be modified (or not) using a floating palette. And, if you have snippets of text or images that you use a lot, there's a handy notepad for easy dragging to and fro.

PageMill will do most HTML codes — and you don't have to know what those codes are. You do have to know what a Web page looks like, and what you want to publish, but PageMill lowers the HTML learning curve — even form creation is easy. If PageMill doesn't know how to display something (like tables), you can use raw HTML text.

While this product's ostensibly targeted at marketing types who don't want to be HTML-savvy, PageMill will be useful to all authors. If you're a heavy-duty Webmaster, PageMill's sister program, SiteMill (to be reviewed in a future issue of *The Net*), will track and repair your links.

PageMill is a revolutionary tool for the Internet — you'll spend more time dreaming up content and less time fiddling with code — and that's something we'd all like. **A+**

*— KT*

## Supra Simple Internet

***Manufacturer*: Supra Corporation**
***Platform*: Mac, Windows**
***Contact*: 800 727 8772**
***Price*: $210 U.S.**

Setting up a connection often requires a level of tech-savvy that's beyond most consumers. PCs and Macs each have individual quirks that can cause varying difficulties when their owners try to set up dial-up connections, and each service provider has its own little configuration specifics, which add another layer of complexity. This is exactly what has prompted various companies to put together products that give step-by-step Internet connections and that just about anybody can use. Supra Simple Internet is an attempt to make even the village idiot stand a fair chance of setting up a connection.

This package not only comes with Web clients (Mosaic and an e-mail utility) and a pre-selected service provider, but also a modem, so you'll have everything you need to connect. Supra has gotten really good at building plug-and-play modems for Windows, so modem set-up is a breeze. And this isn't even an issue for the Mac version. The included software is also pathetically easy, as long as you can find the floppy disk drive. As the software configures itself, all you have to do is click the "O.K." button occasionally to give approval to the way it

wants to set itself up. When I installed it, the software dialed out automatically, made the connection, and gave me a choice of a couple of different account options (which were reasonably priced). The only thing I'm skeptical about is that when a system is designed to run this easily, it can be pretty hard to fix if a problem does come up. **A**

*— WKC*

# books

## Internet Power Web

Neil Daily & Peter Bowen
Pacific HiTech 801 261 1024
I.S.B.N. 1-886162-80-8 $29.95 U.S.

The concept behind *Internet Power Web* is quite good. This slim manual is accompanied by a CD-ROM packed with the latest shareware and freeware Web authoring tools, graphics for Web pages, and various manuals on writing HTML, and it's meant to be a quarterly publication. With the rapidly changing technology of the Web, this is a pretty decent way for a Web master to keep up on new developments.

The price is the only drawback, however. Thirty bucks could buy a more extensive Web design manual, and most of the stuff on the CD-ROM is available on the Internet for downloading. Although the printed manual that comes with it is slim, it's O.K. because HTML is a pretty limited language. I've always thought that 300-page books about writing HTML are pretty much a waste of paper. The bonus with *Internet PowerWeb* is that the HTML tutorial is translated into German and Japanese. You've just gotta love that international thinking.

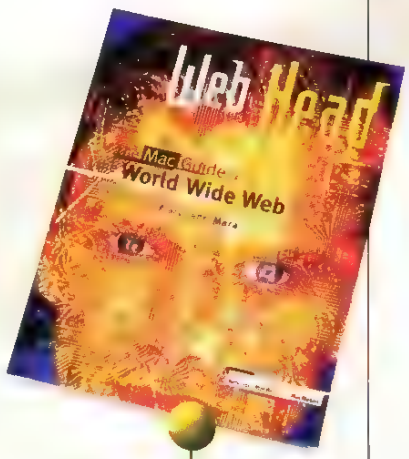
The downside is that, at least in the first issue, the CD-ROM was pretty lame. The files on it were HTML-format, but there were no instructions about which file to access first. And, the HTML files on the top level of the file hierarchy didn't link to a lot of the files in the folders on the disk, so I had to blindly explore to see what the other files were. There wasn't much in the way of good software on the disk, either. There were just some links to software archives on the Internet.

Another issue should be out by the time you read this, and maybe it will show some improvements. **C**

*— WKC*

## Web Head: The Mac Guide to the World Wide Web

Mary Jane Mara
Peachpit Press 510 548 4393
I.S.B.N. 1-56609-176-4 $24.95 U.S.




My first question when I saw the title of this book was: Why should there be a book focused on the Mac experience on the Web? The whole point of the Web is that it's a cross-platform network. Web pages are not written for any specific computer (although they might be written for a browser type). But after reading *Web Head*, this approach started to make sense, primarily because the book focuses on what applications the Mac user will need to get connected, and how to use them. The first chapter is yet another history of the Internet and the Web, although its slant is different than many of the other histories I've read, in that it highlights the development of the hypertext interface.

This is followed by instructions on setting up a SLIP/PPP connection, which could have used some more detail, especially in the part on how to configure MacTCP. Part two covers general principles of Web browsers, defining all sorts of terms found in a lot of browser documentation. The end of this section focuses on how to make your own homepage, which I thought was a little premature at that point in the book, and goes on to suggest using ResEdit to get URLs copied from the hotlist to the homepage HTML. Personally, I think it's absolutely insane to recommend ResEdit to beginners, the audience *Web Head* seems to be written for.

Part three goes into specifics about using three different browsers on the Mac: NCSA Msaic, MacWeb, and Netscape's Navigator. About 35 pages are devoted to each browser; I think that's a little excessive. While this might not seem like too much for software documentation, these browsers are so easy to use and the previous section on browser principles is good enough that part three seems like padding. There's also the problem of software updates. The release of Navigator 2.0 has already made the part on bookmarks obsolete. All of these detailed sections on how to use a Web browser are pretty unnecessary, since the point of a browser is to be a fairly intuitive interface.

Part four is probably the most useful section of the book. It has really good, basic instructions on writing Web pages. It not only covers the coding, but also various principles, like small file size. The last chapter discusses setting up a Web server on a Mac, and I would especially recommend this part to any Mac sys admin thinking about adding a Web server. **B-**

*— WKC*

## The Virus Creation Labs

George C. Smith
American Eagle Publications
P.O. Box 41401 Tucson, AZ 85717
I.S.B.N. 0-929408-09-8 $12.95 U.S.

Rarely do I get to review an Internet-related book that really, genuinely, 100 percent keeps my interest. Most are strewn with dry layouts, nowhere-near-funny attempts at wit, and overused media buzzwords like "netiquette" and "turnkey." I'm pleased to announce, though, that one book has managed to truly engage me. I couldn't stop reading it. Though it's not specifically about the Internet, it's closely related. *The Virus Creation Labs* documents the key players involved in the creation of computer viruses (since 1992). With a witty, in-your-face perspective, the author begins with a chapter about the Michelangelo virus, laughing all the while at media paranoia, then winds through virus celebs. Smith acknowledges that some hackers won't like the book, either because of jealousy or because they will dislike the way they've been portrayed. Personally, I think that's what puts this book over the edge. It's bound to offend and bound to entertain. No pain, no gain is what I say.

As hype continues to build about security on the Internet and movies like *Hackers* ooze the real hackers into the mainstream arena, this book is definite a propo material for the time (even though it's a year-and-a-half old). Read it! **A+**

*— BG*

## Java!

Tim Ritchey
New Riders 800 653 6156
ISBN 1-562005-533-X $35.00 U.S.

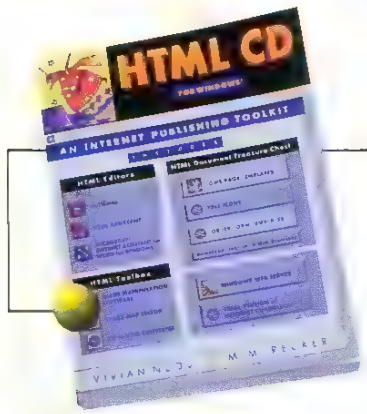
After working on last month's feature about interactive 3D space (see our January 96 issue, pages 44-51) I immediately wanted to implement Java on *The Net*'s Web site, and thought this book would be the perfect answer. It's definitely for advanced users — Java is a programming language, and you need a basic understanding of programming concepts to get anything out of it. The first part almost seems like an apology for the language. I don't know, if I were buying a book on Java, I'd almost have to already be convinced that Java's a good thing before plunking down 35 hard-earned dollars.

On page 113, Ritchey finally starts explaining the language with a "Hello, world!" applet. Once he starts delving into the concepts and structures of Java, the book becomes a useful, thorough introduction to the language. Like any good textbook, *Java!* builds on concepts from previous chapters. As I read each succeeding chapter, my enthusiasm grew as I realized what I could make Java do.

Aside from the overly long introduction, my only other minor hang-up about *Java!* is the icon used with the word "Note." It looks like either a garbage can or a flower pot. Does this mean I should throw the notes away, or maybe plant a seed? You decide. **B**

*— KT*

## HTML CD for Windows: An Internet Publishing Kit




Vivian Neou & Mimi Recker
Prentice Hall 800 382 3419
I.S.B.N. 0-13-232331-1 $39.95 U.S.

Note: This is a book about HTML for Windows. Note: It comes with a CD-ROM full of software. Note: The authors of this book probably couldn't use the command "note" more than they have already. Am I in a bad mood or is this book dreadfully boring?

*HTML CD for Windows* is yet another I-want-to-show-you-how-to-set-up-a-home-page-and-run-a-Web-server book that has typical content, layout, and software on the "disc included." It's by no means a horrible book. It's easy enough to understand, and some of the files on the CD are, in fact, useful (like HotMetal, an image map editor and Windows Web server software). But it's nothing special, nothing new, and it isn't going to make you any more of a Web maven than the hundreds of other Internet HTML books out there. Its one advantage is that it has a better section on how to set up a Windows Web server than most others I've read — so if you're getting ready to set up WHTTP (the server), the book will probably be helpful.

All and all, it's a fine book — dry like a textbook, and full of information — that's no better or worse than the rest of them, except that $40 is a little too high for dry. **C-**

*— BG* ■

# Voyage into Cyberspace

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# Everything You Need to Know About sex online

We live in a world saturated with sex. It wasn't long ago that paintings of nudes — like Goya's "Naked Maja" and Manet's "Olympia" — managed to shock. Today, these paintings are considered works of great art, and contemporary artists are incorporating sex and sexuality into their art in far more suggestive ways. Meanwhile, advertising companies, which long ago established that sex sells, are using seductive pictures of nude or almost-nude bodies to hock everything from underwear to cars, microwaves, and computer hardware. And turning on the TV during prime time exposes you to steamy and alluring sexual titillation.

It should be no surprise, then, that sex is alive and well on the Internet. But what does this mean for you, the person who logs on? If the hype is to be believed, you'd expect kiddie porn to leer at you from every nook and cranny on your cyber journeys. So, just in time for Valentine's Day, *The Net* offers a comprehensive, 16-page feature in which we dish up the truth about sex online.

In the pages that follow, we investigate just what it is that's out there and raising such a storm of controversy. You'll find the best places online to visit if you're looking for a date, safety tips to prevent your online romances from turning scary, and a survey of some of the more erotic newsgroups, chat areas, and shopping sites on the net. We also investigate how the Internet can be an authoritative resource for safe sex education. And for those who want to know if romance really *can* blossom in the virtual world, we've collected some true stories. We also introduce you to ways you can control the sexy or all-too-adult stuff, if that's what you want to do.

We also explore how the net's ability to push the envelope of acceptability is challenging Constitutional freedoms. It is imperative that we all understand the ramifications of legislative battles raging over cyberporn. We walk you through the different proposals that Congresspeople have tried — and are trying — to transform into law. We also offer resources you can use to gain up-to-date information about these continuing clashes.

Our motto throughout is that whether you love it or loathe it, sex is a part of the Internet. Let the debate begin.

***Minda Sandler***

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*Finding Romance Online*

# Love at First Site?

*Karen Wickre*

Affairs at work are risky. Blind dates can be disastrous. Meeting someone in a bar who can pass the broad daylight test is rare. Just how are we supposed to meet decent new prospects, anyway? Probably not in chat rooms, those nests of over-zealous punctuation and lean thinking. But it's not impossible to discover kindred spirits online.

You might try an old-fashioned concept with an e-twist: perusing personals and corresponding with the one you like via e-mail. A company called Electric Classifieds has created a division called match.com (**http://www. match.com**), which offers online personal ads to take the angst out of meeting the previously unknown for who-knows-what. To protect the wary and battle-scarred, match.com touts both privacy and security: You post your profile for all to see using an anonymous screen alias and an e-mail address housed at match.com. You can browse the profiles of others at random, and receive e-mail from those who respond to your profile. If — and only if — you like your correspondents enough to meet do you come out of the electronic closet to divulge your particulars.

The profile format allows you to describe what kind of person you seek, and provide personal details: your age, geography, ethnicity, and gender. The software sorts and matches your requirements within the service's database of members (since opening last April, some 35,000 people have registered and created profiles). In theory, you need do nothing until Mr. or Ms. Right's note appears in your mailbox. If you're restless and want to cruise, the profiles (including optional GIFs you can send in) are browseable any time. There is no charge to look through all the ads, or to post your profile.

In January, match.com began charging a $10 monthly fee for the privilege of contacting a member and receiving messages. In concept, says VP of marketing Fran Maier, "We're more like a dating service than a print personals section — only we're cheaper. You could buy a computer and go online for less than it costs to get into a dating service."

**Fran Maier, VP of marketing for match.com.**

Maier notes that, on average, some 5,000 e-mail messages are exchanged daily between match.com members, and that 2,000 new women and men register each week. Overall, the service claims that 20 percent of its customers are women, and Maier reports that active outreach to women customers is a priority. "We hope that our service will offer the sort of welcoming environment to attract women, by providing the safety and security so often lacking in various commercial relationship services."

Can't live by e-mail alone, but don't feel ready for a solo date with a match.com prospect? The service has begun producing face-to-face social events in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Members wear name tags with their match.com alias handles, buy their own drinks, and mingle in real time. Maier says the parties, promoted through the match.com Web zine (**http://www.match.com:80/link.cgi/9388828457/zine/cover.tpl**), have drawn about 100 people each time, and as membership grows, they'll be offered in other cities.

As for satisfied customers, a number of members have reported back. "Your Web site really works. I posted yesterday and now I have a new friend," writes one. "You're making a world without frontiers, where every man and woman are friends," trills another. A third writes, "I'm going to advertise this URL all over the place. Congrats on doing something USEFUL and HELPFUL (sic) with the Internet." Whether or not you meet the Perfect 10 online, one thing's for sure: You increase the probability 100 percent by taking the chance.

## Advice for the Lovelorn

*Karen Wickre*

Dan Savage is creator of the advice column "Savage Love," featured in alternative weekly papers around the country. As someone who's read lots of letters about relationships going awry, or never getting off the ground at all, he thinks the Internet serves as "a refuge for people who feel their brains are really what they have to offer. If [they're] your best trait," he adds, "the net certainly highlights that."

But he also stresses that the Internet can serve as a hiding place for those "with no social skills, or those who don't feel like they deserve love and affection because they don't look like Calvin Klein models."

On the plus side, says Savage, on the net "you are given the ability to establish intellectual and emotional compatibility before meeting face to face." That's a good thing, in his view, because the exchanges can't be faked, and "you've let the other person in so far already before actually meeting."

But what about online situations where becoming another character is part of the action? There are scores of ongoing MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) and MOOs (MUDs, Object-Oriented) and elaborate simulation games approximating real life, except that you embody someone entirely different from yourself. It's pretty easy to blur the line between the fantasy role and who you are off the set. But Savage notes: "The net didn't invent lying." It offers, he believes, "the freedom to create different personae, and therefore it's a fine, wonderful, beautiful, dangerous thing" to use it to connect with others, he says.

# Just Ask Her: Isadora Speaks About Love Online

*Karen Wickre*

When I called San Francisco-based sex therapist and columnist Isadora Alman, she told me about a client of hers who related the story of "an intense cybersex session that was so real" to him he fought the urge to send his partner e-mail the next day "asking if it hurt."

Intense or not, Alman believes, there is great value to going online in order to find community — and not only to score, but to meet others like yourself. She has a client who confided what she calls his "atypical sexual desires." Her assuring him "that others shared his predilection wasn't nearly as effective as his finding an online group with whom he could share his fantasies," she comments. "It was enormously liberating for him to find that online space — and risk-free, too. If he'd had a hundred acquaintances and got up the nerve to ask, he might have gotten one or two responses, but they would come with a lot of embarrassment and strangeness."

As for taking the step to meet people on the net, Alman believes it's a valid way to proceed, even though "there are enormous limitations in getting to know someone online, because all the usual sensory cues are gone."

So, online communication — whether role-playing, flirting, or cruising — does require verbal facility. But if it's the only social outlet someone has, then the net is "merely an advanced masturbation device," believes Alman.

# Tips for Turning Virtual Love into Real Love

*Tom Geller*

I just got off the phone with Kris, a woman who picked me up on America Online. About three weeks ago, she read my profile (under the "Members" menu), liked what she saw, and decided to send me an Instant Message. We only had a chance to chat for a few minutes before AOL went down for its nightly "system maintenance" (grrrrr), but that was enough time to find out that we're about the same age, live 15 miles apart, and want to trade mail.

And that's just what we did. She described herself and her job. I sent a GIF and told her about myself. We kvetched about work for five or six letters before catching each other online at the same time. When we chatted then, it became clear how afraid we were to talk in-depth about ourselves, our personal histories, or what we liked to do in bed — even about what we hoped to get out of a relationship with one another. We had both held back because she and I had each been burned in the past by what I'll call the Cyrano Syndrome: we'd been taken in by good online writers, only to feel misled when we met them in person.

Fortunately, the online medium provides several ways to pre-screen candidates before our candid dates — but you have to know what those methods are before you can use them. The most useful pre-screening tools in brief are: personal profiles, which display a basic public "face" for surreptitious viewing; message boards and chat rooms, where you can see what someone is like in a group setting; and online portraits, which tell you whether someone is within your acceptable range of attractiveness. And e-mail is still one of the best ways of getting a feel for your potential mate's personality as you carry on the tradition of flirtatious correspondence that's as old as the written word.

Love may be beautiful, but meeting someone for the first time is too fraught with pitfalls to be romantic. We want to be *sure* that a potential partner is (at the least) not an ax murderer, and (at best) compatible with our hopes and dreams. In the end, you have no way of knowing whether someone is for real until you meet him or her. Before that first meeting, as Kris said, "You could be a 92-year-old named Harriet for all I know. Or a 12-year-old named Harriet, for that matter. You could be anyone at all." That's why I always insist on a phone conversation or two before meeting someone: I may be able to write like a 12-year-old girl or a 92-year-old woman, but that's damn hard to fake on the phone.

Back to Kris and me: She's read my description and seen my picture, we've traded e-mail, and she's heard my voice. We've whittled away our reservations until there seems to be no reason not to meet. She even asked to make sure I had all my body parts ("I was surprised when this one guy turned out to be missing a leg," she said).

We have a date on Wednesday. Wish us luck!

# True Romance Online: Geography Still Matters

*Karen Wickre*

Marcy's[1] online romance with Ted[1] began innocently enough — they were both avid "Star Trek" fans who spent time role-playing within the Star Fleet Academy's nightly simulations on America Online. Marcy was just plunging into the online realm for the first time, and delighted in finding serious "Trek" pals. "I figured this was a place where I could leave my repressed, daily-grind self behind," she said. "It seemed really cool to pretend I was a space traveler in the future."

Soon enough, she was sending and receiving instant messages on the side with Ted, another crew member in the Enterprise corps, as they were carrying out their "official" duties in the elaborate simulations. That led to chat dates to debrief after the simulations ended each night. "It was fun to role-play together, and exciting to get to know each other 'out of uniform,' " Marcy recalls. One conversation led to another, and phone dates began to follow the chat sessions.

Since they lived in opposite parts of the country, the online prose bouquets and regular phone calls constituted dating. "I felt like I had a wonderful secret, the way a beginning romance feels," Marcy remembers. "We both had jobs that kept us working late, and this was our reward at night — to gossip about the rest of the crew, create new scenarios for them, and tease each other," she sighs.

"Somewhere in there, he confessed that he was married — and sick of his wife. All my warning lights went on, but the simulations were way too much fun to stop." Within a week of Ted's confession, he also told his wife, and all hell broke loose — not only was she angry about the cyber-affair, Marcy reports, but really "in hyperspace" about the many hours Ted spent (in time and money) online into the night. The drama at home, and the all-too-real consequences of his online romance, led Ted to log off — permanently.

Marcy, now promoted to lieutenant on the Enterprise, says after feeling "rather pulverized" by her relationship with Ted, she won't be so inclined to post-simulation chats so readily in the future. "Geography still matters," she says. "It's great to play in space, but don't confuse it with the real world."

[1]names have been changed

# The Net as Yenta

*Tom Geller*

In the back of a green filing cabinet, third drawer down, is a stack of fan-fold computer paper about two inches thick. Across the front is the date it was printed: Jan. 17, 1987. Above that, a cryptic account ID in larger letters: STG8384. It's a package of correspondence, one letter per page, from my first few months in college. I am STG8384, and that package tangibly represents the most valuable benefit I took away from that year at Oberlin College: my development as a social and sexual creature, facilitated by electronic mail.

**WORD**

***Yenta: The Yiddish word for "matchmaker."***

That lonely first year, I spent 20+ hours per week in the computing center. I didn't feel capable of meeting anyone face to face. But through mailing lists and primitive VMS-based bulletin boards, I got used to seeing the same account IDs over and over again. Eventually, I grew to trust and like some of them well enough to explore feelings about sex and love. Oberlin was only one place where e-mail and chat helped me to meet people, whether they became lovers or friends.

These applications have been my way into societies around the world to which I would otherwise have no entry. In Cincinnati, late-night sessions on a 300-baud modem introduced me to international chat and local bulletin board systems (BBSs). In a Dutch city foreign to me, I was invited to a party as the result of logging into yet another BBS, Paisley Park. And since I still like to travel, national online services, the World Wide Web, IRC, and Usenet newsgroups continue to act as my ***yenta*** when I go out looking for dates. When I regard the memory-mosaic of people I've met via online media, the importance of a given experience doesn't entirely depend on whether we had sex. I've learned to better enjoy a range of relationships as they are — à la carte — and have taken advantage of the extensive menu provided by the online world.

## Getting Started: Books About Love Online

***Modem Love***
by Rexxxxxx
Kensington Publishing
ISBN: 0-8217 4921 8
$12.00 U.S.

***Love Online***
by Phyllis Phlegar
Addison-Wesley
800 238 9682
ISBN: 0-201-40965-8
$9.95 U.S.

***Erotic Connections***
by Billy Wildhack
Keyhole Publishing
ISBN: 1 878739 78-6
$24.95 U.S.

***net.sex***
by Nancy Tamosaitis
Z ff-Davis Press
800 688 0448
ISBN: 1-56276-285-0
$14.95 U.S.

***The Joy Of Cybersex: An Underground Guide to Electronic Erotica***
by Philip Robinson & Nancy Tamosaitis
Brady Publishing
ISBN. 1-56686-107-1
$24.95 U.S.

***Love Bytes***
by David Fox
ISBN: 1-878739-88-3
$18.95 U.S.

## The Spot

**http://www.thespot.com/**

Programs on the Web aren't so different from programs on prime time TV, if The Spot, an "episodic" Web site, is any indication. Taking its cue from "Melrose Place" and "Beverly Hills 90210," this site follows the affairs, happenings, and ups and downs of five hot young Los Angelinos. They live in a sprawling, seven-bedroom beach house with a 42-year history as a

carousing and partying site (supposedly, three major sexual icons of the 20th century — Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and Jim Morrison — hung out there).

The Spot is suffused with teasing, playful sexual innuendo. Newcomers can click on the "Spot Virgins" hot button ("First Timers Lose it Here"), which opines that "We know that it's your first time, so we promise to be gentle." Spot virgins also are taught that, "Not everyone is the same when it comes to The Spot. Some like it everyday. Others want to do it less frequently and indulge in long, luxurious Spot Sessions." Spot addicts who "like to do it on a regular basis" can hit the hot buttons of their favorite characters to find out their latest adventures, the site graciously informs.

Once you start exploring The Spot, the creators predict, you might just find that this won't be a one-night stand.

*Minda Sandler*

# Working Up an Erotic Profile

*Karen Wickre*

When we connect with others (online or off), the whole challenge is to keep the spark alive. Is it possible that online activity can help that?

Sarah Berg and Alice Ray think so. They've created Reclaiming the Erotic (**http://www.rippleeffects.com**), a Web site where it's "safe to take a date" in order to work up your Erotic Profile. (Until Web chat and video teleconferencing are a little easier to deal with, we're talking about a date that may consist of two people in front of one monitor.)

The profile consists of an interactive survey, the results of which are tallied and returned with your profile via e-mail. "It won't sort people into 'long or short,' 'gay or straight,' 'three times a week or two,' " says designer Ray. Rather, the results of the test are a lovingly worded prose description that is purposely genderless (lots of "he/she"), with fairly broad pronouncements that will undoubtedly convince many test-takers that the profile is speaking directly to them. ("Your heart is in the right place almost exactly half-way between head and crotch.")

So, once you get your Erotic Profile score, will you be able to find what you want out on the net? Unfortunately, Sarah Berg says, "most of the sexually oriented sites in cyberspace are about as enticing as the seedy theaters which preceded them."

Although Reclaiming the Erotic is a graphically appealing Web site, creator Alice Ray notes that plain old e-mail also has a very definite place in enabling intimacy. "It brings back the potential for a romantic, even a 'Victorian' way of communicating by short notes on a daily basis, and allows people to bridge space easily." But, she notes, if e-mail becomes "a substitute for direct communication, where 90 percent of what happens is non-verbal, then it decreases the value instead of adding value."

Berg laments that opportunities for online connections between people "are rising at the same time that the chance for shared public experience is declining." But, she adds: "If shared communication forges understanding across boundaries and is a catalyst to direct interaction, then we have something exciting on our hands."

## Dating/Matchmaker Services

#1 SINGLES InfoHaus Page
**http://www.infohaus.com/access/by-seller/1_SINGLES**

A Matter of the Heart
**http://www.njcc.com/~kmoore/**

American Singles
Non-Profit Dating Service
**http://www.as.org/as/**

Blind Date on The Net
**http://www.america.net/~carbone/blind_date.html**

Bureau One Personals
**http://www.cupidnet.com/cupid/bureau1/**

Campus Singles
**http://www.campusingles.com/**

Christian Singles On Line Home Page
**http://www.netrunner.net/~gigimia/singles/index.html**

Computerized Matchmaking Online
**http://www.calweb.com/~swifty/match.html**

Cupid's Network Inc
**http://www.cupidnet. com/cupid/**

CYBERDATING
**http://www.cyberdating.com/~imagemap/newcyber?37,21**

CyberServer CyberFriends
**http://dare.com/fr_main**

DANCLINK
**http://www.cts.com/~danclink/**

E-Mail by PhotoDate
**http://www.win.com/~grafx/pdate/pdate.html**

Face To Face
**http://www.mall2000.com/face/face.html**

Florida Dating Network
**http://www.calweb.com/~swifty/florida.html**

Future Now Astrological
Virtual Dating Service
**http://www.futurenow.com/dating/astro_dating.html**

Internet Foto Introduction
**http://www.interpac.net/~hit/ifi.html**

Internet Social Registry
**http://www.vpm.com/isr/**

Man @ Finder Personal Ads UNITED STATES State List
**http://www.netfinder.com/surfwest/manfind/states.htm**

Mark Tompsett's Personals Web-Page
**http://calum.uwaterloo.ca/u/mtompset/personals/personals.html**

Matchmaker International
**http://www.csquare.com/1030/matchmaker/matchmaker.html**

MatchMaker Modem
**http://www.dallas.email.net/**

People Seeking People Index
**http://www.kaiwan.com/~bayers/cgi-bin/mate_index.html**

PERSONALS
**http://www.webcom.com/~phonsex1/1stchoic.html**

Positive Planet
**http://www.serv.net/planet/**

Prodigy Web Personals
**http://prodigy.telepub.com/Prodigy/**

public.com Personals
**http://www.public.com/personals/**

Romance Online
**http://www.equinox.net/dooley/rol/home.htm**

Romance Rendezvous
**http://www.start.com/start/romance.html**

San Diego Singles
**http://www.cri.com/~wkronert/singles.html**

Single and Looking
**http://www.pi.net/~tvdboon/**

Singlesnet
**http://www.singlesnet.com/**

The EEN Personal Ad Department
**http://www.lyb.com/welcome/een-personals/index.html**

The Internet Personals
**http://www.montagar.com/personals/index.html**

The Silicon Matchmaker
**http://www.silicon.email.net/**

Toronto Dating
**http://www.io.org/~techart/webcon/phpl.cgi?webcon/main.html**

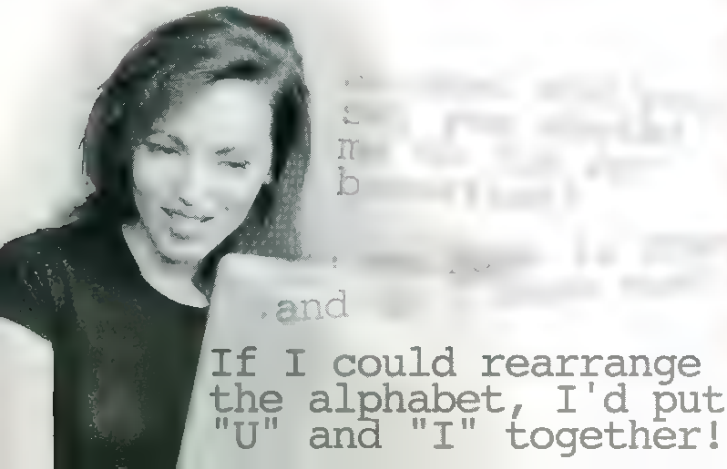
Virtual MeetMarket
**http://wwa.com:1111/**

Vis a Vis
**http://bamboo.anu.edu.au/~visavis/**

Web Personals Personal Ad Listings
**http://www.webpersonals.com/**

*— compiled by Heather Lusk*

## Top Pickup Lines on the Net



# Get Your Virtual Love Now: Romancing Online, in **REAL TIME**

*Tom Geller*

If you're looking for real-time love talk on the Internet, welcome to the world of IRC (Internet Relay Chat). Some time around 1987, folks started using the "talk" function in Unix to set up centralized chat locations, where anyone with net access could take part in CB-like discussions.

A year later, Finnish programmer Jarkko Oikarinen formalized the format with his IRC program. When IRC first started, there were just a handful of channels, identified only by numbers.

But just as Channel 9 came to be known as the Highway Patrol channel in Citizen's Band-land, so did IRC channels gain their own "personalities": 69 became the "straight" sex channel (for obvious reasons), and 33 the gay channel. (A bisexual channel was proposed for 51, which is halfway between 33 and 69. It never caught on.)

***For more information about IRC and how to use it, check out the netFAQ column on page 80.***

Since then, the system has exploded to such a degree that anywhere from 2,000 to 6,000 channels are typically running at any given time. While this is encouraging, it makes it hard to find the channel you want — unless you already know its name.

### How to Get on IRC

Unfortunately, getting on IRC can be pretty daunting to the first-time user. It's a text-based system — no icons to guide you — ruled by arcane commands and an even more secretive culture.

Basically, you'll need to use a Telnet program to log onto an IRC server, either directly or through your Internet service provider.

A specialized IRC program will make the going easier: ircle or Homer for the Mac, IRCIIWIN, mIRC, or WinSock IRC Client for Windows machines. Follow the program's instructions to connect to an IRC server. In the U.S., the three most popular ones are **irc.bu.edu**, **irc.colorado.edu**, and **irc.uiuc.edu**. To "join" a channel, type "/join channelname."

### Where to Go

A survey of the 3,000 channels running one recent Friday afternoon turned up more than 200 that were of an obviously sexual nature.

Supposedly, those with prurient names have a higher likelihood to host sex-related chat. Below, you'll find a sampling of those that were among the most active the day I checked. (Of course, sex chat can — and does — occur in every room from time to time.)

### Don't Forget About MUDs

If you're an experienced user of MUDs, by now you're probably saying: "Why are you wasting time with newsgroups and IRC? Come to a Multi-User Dungeon — that's where the *real* action is!" And it's true: along with all the fantasy role-playing that takes place in these text-based adventures, there's an awful lot of sexual and romantic chat going on.

In addition, clever (and well-motivated) programmers have expanded the medium to allow users to develop real personalities within these imaginary worlds, and honest-to-god relationships that continue for months are not uncommon.

However, the world of MUDs is incredibly complex, with each site boasting its own complement of features, commands, and rules. While that shouldn't turn you off from trying them out, it would be hard to do MUDs justice in this short article.

If you'd like to learn more about these virtual worlds, point your Web browser at **http://draco.centerline.com:8080/~franl/mud.html**, where Francis Litterio and friends explain it all for you.

### To Learn More About IRC:

Check out the FAQ at **http://www.cdt.org/cda.html**, or visit the IRC help pages at:

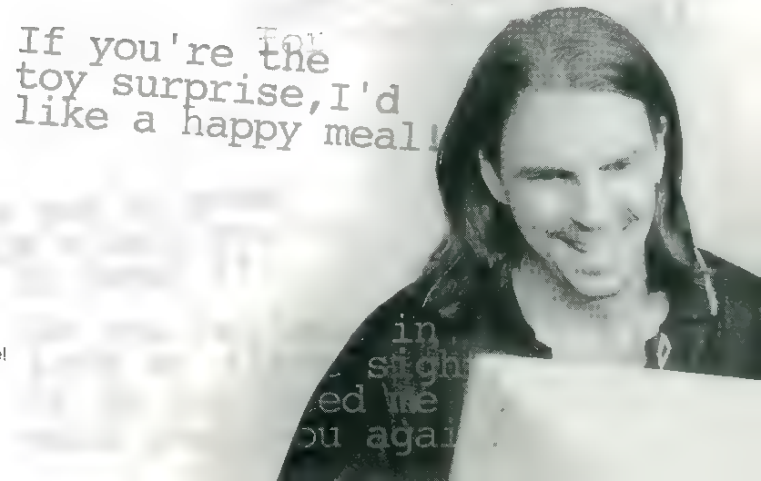
**http://www2.undernet.org:8080/~cs93jd/IRC.html**

**http://mistral.enst.fr/~pioch/IRC/IRCprimer/IRCprimer1.1/IRCprimer1.1.html**

**http://urth.acsu.buffalo.edu/irc/WWW/ircdocs.html**

## General Sex Channels

| Channel name | Comment |
|---|---|
| #3waysex | Where to put that extra arm and other subjects. |
| #30+sex | Also keep an eye out for 20+sex, 40+sex, and so on. |
| #lesbo | Mostly chaste. If you're a man, prepare to get booted out! |
| #bearcave | "Furry-Faced Fellows Frolicking and Fornicating for Fun." |
| #bifems | Like #lesbo, but a bit more varied. Women only. |
| #Cyberotic | Yer good, old-fashioned, all-around sex chat. |
| #hottub | Traditional meeting place for friendly chat and body rubs. |
| #tvsex | The sexual aspects of male-to-female transvestisism. |
| #truthdare | The old party game, played online. |
| #flirt | Light-hearted, fun, and capricious. |
| #singles | General singles chat. Hard-core propositions generally unwelcome. |
| #Kinkysex | Now, this is a better place for hard-core propositions! |
| #sexier | Sexier than what? Don't ask me. |
| #fantasy | Might you find others who share your fantasy? Nawww... |
| #sex4all | ... and all for sex! Hurrah! |
| #phonesex | Sure, it starts on the computer. But who knows where it may lead? |
| #%%teensex | Yes, Virginia, teens have sex. Film at 11. |
| #gayteense | Yes, Virginia, gay teens have sex, too. |
| #SexMyWife | Uhhh... O.K. If you insist. |
| #!DogSex! | Attracted by dogs' oral fixations? You'll quickly discover that you're not alone. |
| #sweetsex | What makes it sweet? That depends on the participants' definitions. |
| #Gay | Not a pickup scene: just honest, friendly talk. |
| #BBW | Fat women and their (mostly) male admirers. |
| #sex2 | Another undifferentiated, hetero sex room. |
| #couchsex | Rolling in potato chips and remote controls: this is the life! |
| #llamasex | I have no idea what this is, and I'm afraid to find out. |
| #Adultsex | An alternative to all the "Teensex" chat rooms. |
| #orgasm69 | Does this one really need a comment? |
| #bi-married | Same-sex flirting for heterosexually married men. |
| #Asianlove | For those with a taste in Oriental art. |
| #loveless | Do you try to pick up people by acting sad and unloved? Me, too! |
| #Goats | O.K., so this really isn't much of a sex chat room. But wouldn't it be funny if it were? |



## Sex Iconography on the Net: Marilyn Lives

Just as many people refuse to let Elvis' memory fade, there are devotees of Marilyn Monroe who continue to worship her voluptuous beauty and fragile soul. Many on the net are paying tribute to this long-time sexual icons, though not all the sites they've created are shrines. Here's a sampling:

**Lovejoy's Marilyn Monroe Image Collection**
http://studentweb.tulane.edu/~llovejo/marilyn/marilyn.html

**Marilyn Monroe**
http://ux1.cso.uiuc.edu/~jarrett/marilyn.html

**Marilyn Monroe at the Hollywood Wax Museum**
http://www.ernestallen.com/tr/ca/HollywoodWaxMuseum/5828.jpg

**Marilyn Monroe Home Page**
http://www.cica.fr/~doucet/marilyn.html

**Marilyn Monroe Postage Stamps**
http://www.kiosk.net/marilyn/

**Marilyn Monroe Web Page**
http://www.netins.net/showcase/agency/marilyn.html

**Marilyn Pages**
http://www.ionet.net/~jellenc/marilyn.html

**The Mailman's Tribute to Marilyn Monroe**
http://arctique.int-evry.fr/~hug/marilyna.html

**The alluring image of Marilyn at the right is from the Marilyn Pages (http://www.ionet.net/~jellenc/marilyn.html).**

# bianca's SMUT Shack

**http://bianca.com/shack/index.html**

***Tom Geller and Minda Sandler***

Entering most Web pages is like being assaulted by an automatic tennis-ball serving machine: The information comes fast and furious, and you have little opportunity to respond.

But visiting bianca's SMUT Shack is more like taking part in a child's mud-pie fight. There's very little "content" in this highly original site, at least in the traditional sense: no catalogs of expensive products, no naked pictures, no news articles.

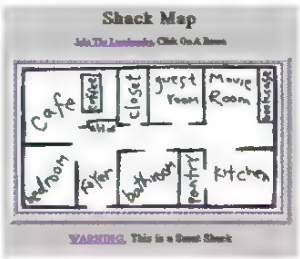
Instead, dozens of interactive "rooms" provide a space for visitors to create their own fantasy-inspired content, whether it's scribbling witty graffiti on the bathroom wall, leaving a sacrifice to bianca at the altar, reading opinions about vibrators, or getting hot and heavy in the Bedroom. As in Multi-User Dungeons, the focus is on instant interaction, and the SMUT Shack's programmers have done a marvelous job transferring the immediacy of chat to

the static (but highly accessible) format of Web pages.

The site is suffused with a generous and witty spirit, which is reflected in bianca's welcome greeting, "with open arms," of all "who would come to the shack and contribute their wisdom, talents, and love." Her entreaties to "...Come on in. Write on bianca's walls, read from her books. Learn and contribute!" echo back to the Flower Power era.

And dirty talk isn't all that's here. bianca has a very definite philosophy of "don't just buy — make!" Her answers to the troubles of life? "Home Brew, Home Grow, Home Bake, Home Everything." In the kitchen, you'll find recipes for ramen (she writes: "Ramen is a food rich in tradition and cultural value.... give a moment's thought to the possibility that ramen is perhaps the single best bridge between East and West, and between the past and the present.") and a variety of other delicious foods, as well as instructions on how to gather and collect botanical plants.

You might have to make several attempts to get in — the site is extremely popular — but it's worth it. Don't be surprised if you spend all afternoon here!




***Erotica For Sale***

# Picking Up A Good Vibration

***Karen Wickre***

You may have noticed that the porn industry is usually the fearless first to tackle new technology. The rise of the home video was due in large part to the pioneering work of sleaze tape producers. And do you recall the scads of X-rated CD-ROMs that were available long before "edutainment" was a word?

On the Web, there are numerous X-rated sites, most of which look like the low-budget shops they often are in the real world. Until now. Good Vibrations, a retailer with a big catalog business featuring sex toys, condoms, sex education materials, and erotic literature, has recently opened for business on the Web (**http://www.goodvibes.com**). This San Francisco-based collective, which since 1977 has operated under the mission of promoting sexual health and pleasure, relies on privacy for its catalog business. It sees the Web as a way to "bring out people who otherwise are hidden," says Toy Buyer Jen Bielman.

**Good Vibrations**

She explains: "The net represents a dimension of anonymity and privacy to customers who, because of their sexual inclinations, all too often feel threatened, physically endangered, or rejected — things that could cause them to suppress their feelings. Isolation is such a large part of what diminishes people's sexual experience," Bielman continues, that the net "is the perfect place to find out that they're not alone."

Of course, that same sentiment has been expressed about television. But Bielman feels that it is "far more dangerous to watch Home Shopping Network than to be on the Internet," largely because TV requires nothing from us, whereas the net actively "lets us make connections between each other."

# Shopping for Your Loved One

*Tom Geller*

When *The Net* asked me to contribute to their special issue looking at sex online, I wondered why they thought of me. I mean, I can't even find sex in San Francisco. But I guess they'd seen something in my eyes — desperation, maybe — that told them I'd know where the goods were, even if I'm too shy to admit it. And they're right. The truth is, I'm part of the huge, hidden population that uses electronic communications to find love, romance, and youknowtherest. Just how big is this community of love- and lust-seekers? Well, a 1994 paper by Jupiter Communications about America Online usage reported that over 40 percent of users' time online is spent in chat, e-mail, and bulletin boards. And if you spend any time in AOL's Member Chat rooms (**Keyword: Chat**) or the Romance bulletin boards (**Keyword: Romance**), you know that folks aren't exactly discussing medieval art.

Whether you're looking for romance enhancement or just a more lively life at home, the net has lots to offer. There are gadgets galore at multitudes of shopping sites dedicated to the erotic. A quick check on Yahoo! finds 200 such sites (**http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Companies/Sex/**).

Below, you'll find a look at some of the more interesting ones. Happy browsing!

## Annie Sprinkle Online

**http://www.infi.net/~heck/sprinkleshow.html**

Here's where to order Annie Sprinkle's "Pleasure Activist" feminist/erotic playing cards. The cards, which picture such "Post-Modern Pin-Ups" as Susie Bright, Lydia Lunch, and Kembra Pfahler, are signed and numbered by Sprinkle, who's made her name in photography, writing, film, and performance art. But she isn't just selling cards. Her site reflects her belief that our sexuality can "be used for personal transformation, physical and emotional healing, self-realization, spiritual growth, and as a way to learn about all of life and death." Don't miss her public cervix announcement.

## Cyberpussy

**http://www.cyberpussy.com/**

Cyberpussy promises to be the "...ultimate World Wide Web site for Fantasy [women's] Clothing, including Sportswear, Lingerie, and Fetish costume." And it has lots and lots of pictures of its products to prove it. But gosh, fellas, did you have to make the site so unattractive? Unreadable white type floats against a distracting purple background. The site (and the products) have limited appeal: all the models are white, and their "X-Large" size is 12-14. But it's the sort of thing you'll like if you like this sort of thing

## Panty-of-the-Month Club

**http://jefferson.fairfield.com/panties/**

I have to admit a strange, geeky reason for loving this site: the opening picture of the reclining model shown is a high-resolution, interlaced GIF. Therefore, she appears on your screen as if in a dream: first hazy and indistinct, reminding you perhaps of a sweet tryst passed in foggy Seattle... then she becomes more distinct, her smile more and more personal, her skin tones increasingly subtle and alive, she almost beckons... God, I need to get out of the house more.

Anyway, this is a pretty nice site, and a good deal more professionally done than many. I have one beef: except for a couple of pictures, the products are inexplicably displayed lying lifelessly on a table. Another marketing opportunity missed. Sizes are extremely limited.

## CyberSexToys

**http://www.webcom.com/~dml/sex/**

It's nice to see someone with a sense of humor in the commercial sex field. David Levine's CyberSexToys (a division of his "Wicked Cool Mall," at **http://www.wcool.com**) is full of fun, from its colorful logo to the diversity of the offerings. Where else will you find a penis-shaped white chocolate pacifier, anal lube, phone sex, and inflatable sheep in the same place?

## Romantasy's Cyboutique

**http://www.romantasy.com**

As befits a "unique place for loving couples and romantic singles," Cyboutique is gorgeous. High-quality graphics laid against tasteful pastel hues accentuate the offerings from this San Francisco-based store. There's actually very little selling here; general information about sex-related products takes the place of the more common hard sell. Regular columns, exclusive to the Cyboutique, round out the pages nicely, and give a reason to keep coming back.

## The Blue Boutique

**http://www.sisna.com/sex/safe.htm**

You have to confirm you're 21 before you can enter the Blue Boutique, and for good reason: It's chock-full of "Sex Toys for Everyone." The toys are rather matter-of-factly displayed in a table on a deep blue background that soberly lists the various products. Click on a GIF of each product package to get more info. There's stuff for almost every taste.

Hot News

# Newsgroups: Pondering Sex and Romance

*Tom Geller*

Looking for a place to muse about sex and romance among like-minded people? While the percentage of people engaging in sex chat is probably a little lower on the Internet at large, the sex-related newsgroups enjoy positions at the apex of popularity. According to Usenet Arbitron results available at **http://www.tlsoft.com/arbitron**, five of the 10 most-read groups are sex-relateds. And, when you calculate the number of bytes that pass through the groups, it's no contest: 21 of the 40 "heaviest" groups exist for the trade of erotic graphics.The following, arranged in order of popularity, are among the newsgroups providing a haven for those who are looking for love, romance, beauty, skin, and more.

**MUSING ABOUT LOVE**
soc.motss
soc.singles
alt.politics.homosexuality
soc.bi
alt.polyamory
soc.couples.wedding
soc.couples.intercultural
alt.sexual.abuse.recovery
fido.ger.sex
de.talk.sex
tw.bbs.sci.sex
soc.couples
de.talk.romance
alt.magick.sex
es.alt.sexo
alt.support.disabled.sexuality
finet.sex

**MAGAZINE-RELATED**
alt.sex.magazines
alt.mag.playboy
alt.magazines.pornographic

**FEELTHY PICTURES**
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.female
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.male
alt.binaries.pictures.supermodels
alt.sex.pictures.female
alt.sex.pictures
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.amateur.female
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.orientals
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.breasts
alt.sex.pictures.male
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.fetish
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.gaymen
alt.binaries.pictures.nude.celebrities
alt.binaries.pictures.girlfriends
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.cheerleaders
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.pregnant
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.pornstar
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.blondes
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.latina
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.black.females
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.redheads
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.oral
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.voyeurism
alt.binaries.sounds.erotica
alt.binaries.pictures.girlfriend
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.cartoons
alt.binaries.pictures.lesbians
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.anime
alt.binaries.pictures.lingerie
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.d
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.amateur.male
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.fetish.feet
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.amateur.d
alt.binaries.pictures.erotic.centerfolds
alt.sex.sounds
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.bears
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.spanking
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.pornstars
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.butts
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.furry
alt.binaries.pictures.victoria.secret
alt.binaries.pictures.voyeurism
alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.art.pin-up

**LUSTY TALK**
alt.sex
alt.sex.wanted
alt.sex.bondage
alt.sex.erotica.marketplace
alt.sex.exhibitionism
alt.sex.services
alt.sex.telephone
alt.sex.stories
alt.sex.spanking
alt.sex.wizards
alt.sex.masturbation
alt.sex.strip-clubs
alt.sex.movies
alt.sex.fetish.orientals
alt.sex.breast
alt.sex.brothels
alt.sex.femdom
alt.sex.voyeurism
alt.sex.swingers
alt.sex.homosexual
alt.sex.fetish.feet
alt.sex.escorts.ads
alt.sex.fat
alt.sex.fetish.fa
alt.sex.intergen
alt.sex.fetish.hair
alt.sex.oral
alt.sex.motss
alt.sex.fetish.watersports
alt.sex.fetish.tickling
alt.sex.trans
alt.sex.prostitution
alt.sex.escorts.ads.d
alt.sex.nudels.me.too
alt.sex.fetish.startrek
alt.sex.fetish.smoking
alt.sex.stories.d
alt.sex.bears

Anti-Stalking Measures

# Staying Safe on the Net: How to Become Cyber Street Smart

*Aliza Sherman*

The Internet is a dangerous place to be. Not! So, why do all the headlines scream "cyber harassment" and "online stalking?" Why does the media make cyberspace out to be some cesspool of weirdos waiting to pounce on unsuspecting women and children? Well, sensational headlines sell papers, so can you blame the editors? They're just trying to make a buck by playing on our fears about connecting to the electronic unknown with our trusty home computer. Enough of the nonsense, let's get down to the facts of going and staying online.

**MYTH:** *Now that I've connected my computer to a commercial online service or the Internet, horrible nasty hackers will be able to get inside my computer and steal my information or damage my hard drive.*

**FACT:** Now, what kind of information do you have on your computer that would really interest a hacker? The reality is that when your modem dials out and connects with America Online or Prodigy or to the Web through an Internet Service Provider, you are not opening your computer to invasion. You are performing a closed communication function. The only computers that are potential targets for hackers are the ones dedicated to the Internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week — those computers that are always on and always connected. These are the ones that usually have security systems installed to protect their data and block unauthorized access.

**MYTH:** *The net is made up of criminals, thieves, and perverts, all waiting for me to log on so they can hurt me, rob me, and harass me.*

**FACT:** Paranoid, are we? Think of the net this way — it's a city, a big city of more than 20 million people. Do most of them really have time to zero in on you as their next prey? As long as you enter this new electronic city with intelligence, awareness and the proper "Netiquette" (net etiquette, that is), your chances of becoming an online victim are slim. I mean, when was the last time you walked out of your house or apartment and were mugged, robbed, or harassed? I'm certainly not saying it doesn't happen, but I don't think anyone can say it happens to them on a daily basis, and if it does, my advice to you is to move!

So, if you want to be cyber street smart, read our list of tips on page 53.

# Safety **Tips**

*Aliza Sherman*

**How can we prevent unwanted advances from those few folks who might be lurking in the shadows of our favorite online service? Here are five basic tips to keep you and your family safer when surfing the net.**

**TIP 1** — Choose your screen name wisely. You may want to use initials and abbreviations for your name, rather than your full name, both when you register for your online account and when you pick your screen name. That way, you won't reveal your identity or gender the minute you enter a chat room or post a message. You'll be able to retain a bit of privacy until you feel comfortable enough to disclose further information. Keep in mind that with many Internet accounts, your registration information is available if someone decides to ***finger*** you. Therefore, ask beforehand that your phone number and address not be included in this finger file, or find out how you can edit it right away.

**WORD**

***Finger:** An online technique that lets anyone access a file of basic information about you.*

**TIP 2** — Keep personal information private. Eventually, you may feel comfortable enough to reveal your full name or other bits of personal and possibly identifying information to someone you encounter on the net, but use the same amount discretion — and maybe a little more — that you would if you met a total stranger on the street. Would you walk up to someone in New York City and say "Hi, my name is Jane Doe, I live at 123 Main Street, and by the way, here's my phone number and credit card number, too"? I don't think so! So, why would you give any of this information out online? Even if someone approaches you online and claims to be an "official" of the commercial online service or your service provider, refrain from telling him/her anything. Official employees of these services do not ask for personal information online, period.

**TIP 3** — Read and listen before speaking up. When you enter a new chat area or begin reading a Usenet newsgroup, hang out for a while and observe or "lurk," as this is called. It's O.K. for you to do this, especially if you're paying attention to the content of the area, the tone, the topics, etc. When you think you have a sense of what is appropriate to say, speak up. And you'll make friends on the net if you offer some valuable advice, suggestions, or answers to someone's questions (only if you know the answer, of course). Being sensitive to the atmosphere of the community you enter will help you avoid getting flamed, harassed, or insulted by others. Think of your position as being similar to what it would be if you were walking toward a group of people involved in a conversation who already now one another. You would probably say, "Pardon me, but I couldn't help but overhear...," rather than, "Hey, I'm new here and by the way, my company is offering Ginsu knives on sale now, but only if you act now, and did I mention that I don't know what you're talking, about but I'm going to express my opinion anyway?"

**TIP 4** — Ignore before you respond. Nine times out of 10, an insulting e-mail or a dirty message is an invitation for trouble. But the person on the other end is waiting for you to respond to feed into his or her game. If you ignore that person, chances are s/he will move on to someone else, because what fun is silence or a blank screen? Most likely, the message you got was somewhat random, like a crank phone call. Try to remember to record the name of the offender or save his/her message onto your hard drive. On a closed system like a commercial online service, you can use this information as evidence when you file a report to the complaint or customer service department. If you are continually harassed, you may have to change your screen name or open a new account on another service. The danger comes if you respond to your harasser and if you reveal identifying information about yourself or that person is able to access it online.

**TIP 5** — Do Unto Others .. This Golden Rule applies both in the real world and in cyberspace because everything online is merely an electronic extension of the real world. The net is filled with real people, and lots of them. If you are rude, chances are people will be rude right back to you. If you are polite and friendly, the responses you receive online will usually reflect that. Being a nice person on the net doesn't guarantee you won't ever be harassed, but a little kindness does go a long way.

**A Final Word**

When you're online, you have a major safety barrier as long as you do not reveal personal information about yourself, including your full name, location, or contact numbers. You're actually more safe behind your computer terminal than you would be standing on any street in any major city. So, go online and discover the world. Being smart helps you be safe!

# Online Stalkers

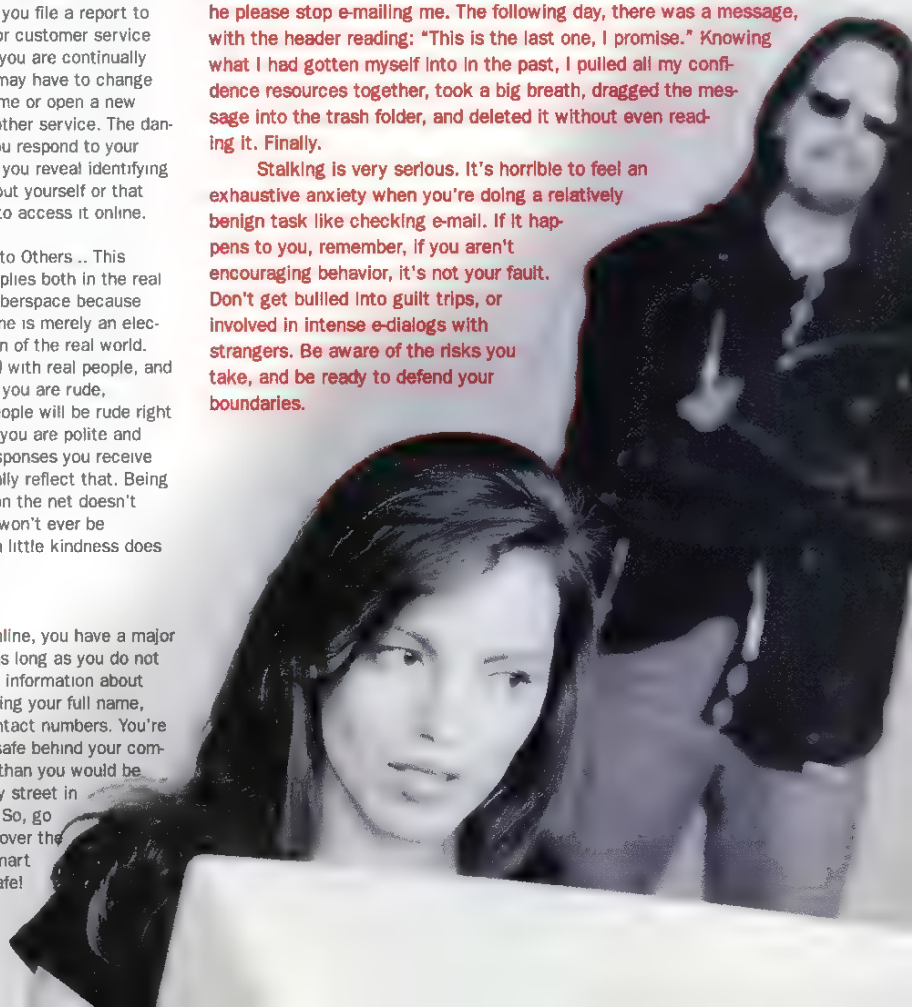
*Lydia Schwartz*

It started a few months ago. I got a message in my mailbox that mentioned something about alienation. It seemed to be asking a question, maybe about the Internet, but it was cryptic nonetheless. I replied, warily and a bit dryly. What followed were a series of other cryptic messages suffused with alienation and loneliness: "I am misunderstood." "Everything in the world is horrible."

I admit, I got drawn in. I empathized with these feelings of alienation. So I responded. One, two, three, and suddenly the diatribes grew longer and increasingly strange. This person was angry. Not necessarily with me (at first), but with society as a whole. One day, the e-mails turned awful. StalkerX revealed his many personal problems, and made the mistake of treading on my feminist beliefs with offensive comments about a woman in his life. I also realized at this time that StalkerX was full of steam and the type of person who whines whines whines. In a fit of rage, I succumbed to the trap and fired off a flaming e-mail, ranting about why I wanted this person to leave me alone. I should have just refused to play the game, but I was deeply engaged in a mind game with what my friend calls "a psychic vampire."

After my response, I set a kill file (a program within most e-mail managers to filter out unwanted mail before you even see it) to destroy all incoming missiles (e-mail) from my little stalker friend. This seemed to work for a while. But then, presto, one day last week, it was StalkerX, back to defend himself with a new e-mail account to deceive my filter. Sigh. I read the message. Guilt trips overflowed. This time, older, stronger, and wiser, I was ready to delete the file and not respond. But foolish foolish girl that I can be, I felt the need to set him straight. This time, I took the honest, begging approach, asking him to leave me alone, and reminding him that he was invading my personal space. I asked that he please stop e-mailing me. The following day, there was a message, with the header reading: "This is the last one, I promise." Knowing what I had gotten myself into in the past, I pulled all my confidence resources together, took a big breath, dragged the message into the trash folder, and deleted it without even reading it. Finally.

Stalking is very serious. It's horrible to feel an exhaustive anxiety when you're doing a relatively benign task like checking e-mail. If it happens to you, remember, if you aren't encouraging behavior, it's not your fault. Don't get bullied into guilt trips, or involved in intense e-dialogs with strangers. Be aware of the risks you take, and be ready to defend your boundaries.



# Playing It Safe

*Minda Sandler*

Tonight, 89 Americans will get AIDS; 3,835 Americans will get gonorrhea; and 10,960 Americans will get chlamydia.

*— statistics from Condoms 101*
**(http://www.umich.edu/~webspin/c101/c101.html)**

Nationwide, 86 percent of teenage men and 75 percent of teenage women are sexually active.

*— statistics from the Coalition for Positive Sexuality*
**(http://www.positive.org/cps/)**

The Internet is not only a repository of dating resources, places to download dirty pictures, and areas where you can share your fantasies with like-minded others. It's also become an educational tool in the struggle to promote safer sexual practice and more educated sexual practitioners, particularly among today's sexually active youth. While some of these sites may be a bit dry, they're packed with information that's especially relevant to teenagers beginning to explore their sexuality.

The best safe sex/sex education site I've seen was created by the Chicago-based Coalition for Positive Sexuality (**http://www.positive.org/cps/**). Using a visually appealing style, the site uses a frank approach to teach teens how to stay healthy if they're sexually active. Another very good and well-designed place on the net providing materials to encourage safe sex is The Safer Sex Page (**http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/safesex.html**). Describing itself as the largest archive of information on safer sex information on the World Wide Web, it offers "brochures" about safer sex, HIV transmission, and condoms, plus links to health educators and counselors. There's also a Safer Sex Forum area that lets Internet users add their own comments to a monthly discussion topic.

*For a more comprehensive look at AIDS/HIV resources on the net, check out pages 71-74.*

And the Risk Advisory site (**http://www.path.org/riskadvs/riskbroc.htm**), offers information about an interactive Windows-compatible program for HIV prevention counselors. The site analyzes risk based on sets of behavior.

## Other Safe Sex Sites:

**AIDS Now! Project for Teens**
http://www.itec.sfsu.edu/aids/aids.html

**Children With AIDS Project**
http://www.aidskids.org/whower.htm

**Children's Animated Television HIV/AIDS Info**
http://www1.usa1.com/~furball/aids.html/

**Complete Facts on STDs**
gopher://gopher.health.state.ny.us/11/.consumer/.factsheets

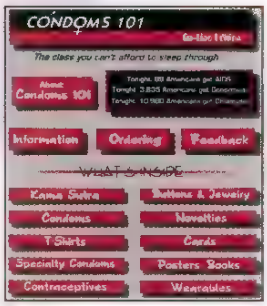
**Condoms and Latex**
http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/safesex/condoms.html

**Risks of Oral Sex**
http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/safesex/persp/perspectives.1.2.html

**Sexual Health Advocacy and Peer Education**
http://www.missouri.edu/~shape/

**STD Homepage**
http://med-www.bu.edu/people/sycamore/std/std.htm

# Get Yer Condoms Online!




Maybe it's true that virtual sex is the safest sex, but you can also use the Web to get ready for safe sex in the real world. And you won't have to deal with the embarrassment of asking for a box of condoms as you stand in a long line of people checking out of the drug store. There's lots of different places to go to buy condoms, from the traditional Trojan ones to slightly more creative offerings.

Condoms 101 (**http://www.umich.edu/~webspin/c101/c101.html**) is probably the best-looking condom site I've seen. Billed as "the class you can't afford to sleep through," it uses great graphics to present lots of safe sex information and reasons to use condoms. Then, it lets you act on the information by ordering a variety of condom products, including regular and specialty condoms, novelties, and more.

**"Latex condoms are the only form of contraception now available that human studies have shown to be highly effective in protecting against the transmission of HIV and other STDs."**

*— Food and Drug Administration*

At Condom Club International (**http://www.webcom.com/~condom/**), you're offered a membership designed to protect you privacy and pamper your partner. For a monthly fee of $14 (plus tax and shipping), 15 "premium" condoms and related items will arrive directly at your home. Plus, Condom Club International throws in a novelty condom each month ("just for fun") and a new velvet holder pouch. Another club you can join to receive lots of different brands is Condoms of the Month Club (**http://netcenter.com/netcentr/adult/condom.html**). Membership costs $7 a month, and gets you 12 "fresh, quality, name brand, latex condoms discreetly mailed each month." Cupid Condom Country (**http://webcon.com/cupid/index.html**) specializes in lots of novelty items, including hot fudge-flavored and glow-in-the-dark condoms. Don't visit this site, though, if you're offended by explicit language.

Condom Country (**http://www.condom.com/**) has a special narrator, Condom Cowboy, who lends a breezy air to this rather pragmatic commercial sell. Only "the best darn sellin' " condoms are offered here. If you're price-conscious, try Adam's & Company Discount Condoms site (**http://www.newart.com/adams/**), where you can get 60 Saxon latex condoms (the same ones sold in stores) for only $14.95. Or, visit Condom Sense (**http://www.webcom.com/~condomz/**), where condoms are sold for just 30 cents each. There's also the Condom Dispenser site (**http://shops.net/shops/Condom Dispenser/**), which gives you a choice of such products as the Kiss of Mint Condom and Exotica Snugger Fit for discount prices. Also, stop by the Condom Shop (**http://www.geewiz.com/**) for direct ordering of 30 "best-selling" brands of domestic and foreign condoms, gels, lotions, personal lubricants, succulents, and natural herbal products. All of these sites let you order directly online for ultimate convenience.

*Minda Sandler*

# Pornography and the Internet: The Societal and Congressional Fight

*Barbara Bergesen*

It's true that there is pornography on the net, and what many would consider verbal obscenities also exist there.

But why all the fuss about cyberporn lately in the media? Part of the outcry stems from the fact that there's a fine line between exercising your right to free speech and infringing on someone else's rights. And such an infringement can occur on the Internet. People can send you things, things you didn't ask for and may not want to see. And the government, recently alarmed by this fact, has taken several different courses of action to combat cyberporn. But the consensus in the Internet community, among those who actually use the medium the most and are therefore the most familiar with it, is that unsolicited porn rarely ends up on your computer. You find pornography on the Internet if — and only if — you look for it, and it's your right to choose to do so.

**Growth of a Controversy**

Most likely, the day the government unleashed the Internet to the first college campus about two decades ago was the moment pornography was born on the Internet.

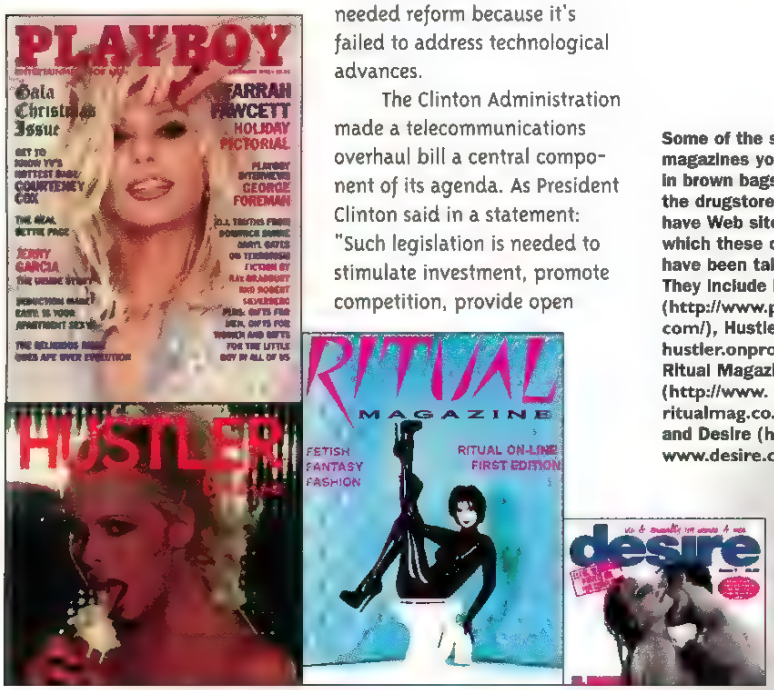
But the legislative history for addressing pornography on the Internet only dates back to 1994. In February of that year, during the second session of the 103rd Congress, Senator Ernest Hollings (D-SC) introduced a bill to "foster the further development of the Nation's telecommunications infrastructure and protection of the public interest, and for other purposes." This bill, known as the telecom reform bill, was intended to reform the Communications Act of 1934. According to many industry observers, the Communications Act of 1934 needed reform because it's failed to address technological advances.

The Clinton Administration made a telecommunications overhaul bill a central component of its agenda. As President Clinton said in a statement: "Such legislation is needed to stimulate investment, promote competition, provide open

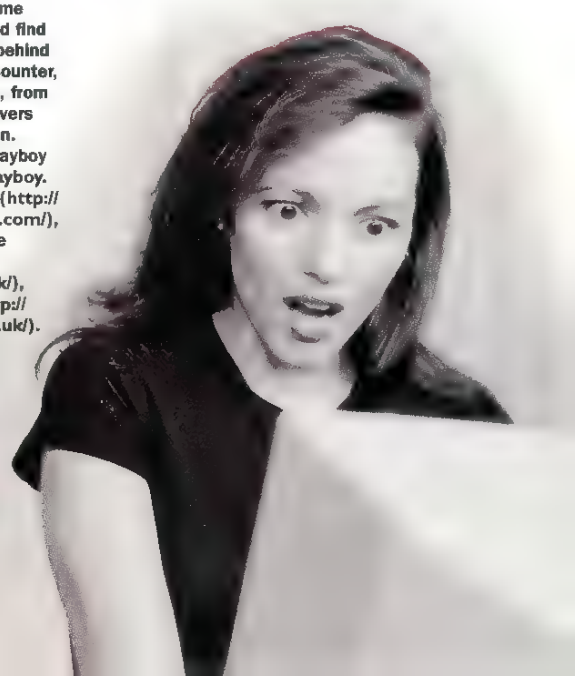
## IN FAVOR OF REGULATING CYBERPORN:

"... Thousands of individuals both in this country and abroad are regularly placing obscenity and indecency on the Internet. It is not possible to make anything more than a dent in the serious problem of computer pornography if Congress is willing to hold liable only those who place such material on the Internet while at the same time giving legal exemptions or defenses to service or access providers who profit from and are instrumental to the distribution of such material. The Justice Department normally targets the major offenders of laws. In obscenity cases prosecuted to date, it has targeted large companies which have been responsible for the nationwide distribution of obscenity and who have made large profits by violating federal laws. Prosecution of such companies has made a substantial impact in curbing the distribution of obscenity, with many such offenders going out of business altogether. So too will prosecution of access providers which *knowingly* traffic in obscenity have a substantial impact, a far greater impact than just the prosecution of a person who places one or a few prohibited images on the Internet. Such a person could not traffic in pornography without the aid or facilitation of the service or access providers. Indeed, if Congress includes provisions protecting access or service providers in whatever bill is finally passed, it is likely that most in this country who are trafficking in indecency to children or obscenity would continue to do so since the threat of prosecution would be minuscule, given the numbers of those currently involved in this activity."

*— a collection of conservative groups, including the Christian Coalition, Traditional Values Coalition, the American Family Association, and more*
**(http://www.cdt.org/policy/freespeech/cc_itr.html)**




**Some of the same magazines you'd find in brown bags behind the drugstore counter, have Web sites, from which these covers have been taken. They include Playboy (http://www.playboy.com/), Hustler (http://hustler.onprod.com/), Ritual Magazine (http://www.ritualmag.co.uk/), and Desire (http://www.desire.co.uk/).**



**Senator Exon wouldn't be happy about such male fantasy-oriented Web sites as Club Paradise (http://www.clubparadise.com/) and Exposed (http://www.exposed.com/).**

access to information networks, strengthen and improve universal service, and provide for flexible regulations for this important industry."

One of the more controversial provisions of the telecom reform bill was introduced by Senator James Exon (D-NE) and formally called the Communications Decency Act of 1995. The intent of the measure was "to protect the public from the misuse of the telecommunications network and telecommunications devices and facilities." Basically, it sought to make "indecent" material on the Internet illegal, with the aim of protecting minors. It would outlaw indecency on computer networks, including commercial online services and the Internet, and would impose fines of up to $100,000 or a two-year jail term on anyone making indecent material available to any person under the age of 18. The so-called Exon Amendment was part of the Senate telecommunications bill, which passed in the Senate on June 15 by an 81-18 vote.

When the Telecommunications bill was debated in the House, the Representatives chose to address the topic of indecency on the Internet in a different way. The House approved an amendment introduced by Reps. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Christopher Cox (R-Calif.) that specifically prohibited government censorship of the Internet. Their "Internet Freedom and Family Empowerment Act" was in direct conflict with the Exon amendment. Cox-Wyden proposed relying on technology to screen out unwanted material from the Internet, rather than on a government-dictated solution, such as censorship. The Cox-Wyden plan also encouraged the government to help parents and others find ways of blocking out X-rated material.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) introduced yet another amendment that was more conservative than the Cox-Wyden amendment. The so-called Hyde amendment would change federal obscenity laws so that some online speech could be criminalized. It, too, was approved in the House.

### AGAINST REGULATING CYBERPORN:

"I think that the [Exon] Amendment... will have no real meaning and have no real impact and in fact I don't think will survive. It is clearly a violation of free speech and it's a violation of the right of adults to communicate with each other. I don't agree with it and I don't think it is a serious way to discuss a serious issue, which is: How do you maintain the right of free speech for adults while also protecting children in a medium which is available to both? That's also frankly a problem with television and radio, and it's something we have to wrestle with in a calm and mature way as a society. I think by offering a badly thought-out and not very productive amendment, if anything, that puts the debate back a step."

*— House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.)*

### WHO'S MARTIN RIMM?

Last year, an undergraduate engineering student named Martin Rimm, in conjunction with a research team at Carnegie Mellon University, conducted a study of pornography online. The study claimed to track, for the first time, what people actually download, rather than what they say they want to see. Titled "Marketing Pornography on the Information Superhighway," the study was published in the *Georgetown Law Journal*. An advance preview of the findings was given to journalist Philip Elmer-DeWitt and written up as the July 3 *TIME* magazine cover story. It launched an avalanche of criticism and anger in the Internet community. Track the Rimm controversy at **http://www2000.ogsm.vanderbilt.edu/rimm.replies.cgi**, and at **http://www2000.ogsm.vanderbilt.edu/cyberporn.debate.cgi**.

You can find the original Rimm Study at **http://trfn.pgh.pa.us/guest/mrstudy.html.**

## Cyberporn Legislation Timeline:

**1994**
Congress attempts to pass a telecommunications reform bill but is unsuccessful

**February 1, 1995**
Senator Jim Exon (D-Neb.) introduces the Exon Bill, a.k.a. The Communications Decency Act of 1995 in the Senate. It would amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit the use of telecommunications for harassment. It is referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, but never voted on.

**February 21, 1995**
The Communications Decency Act of 1995 is introduced in the House of Representatives, and referred to the Committee on Commerce as well as the Committee on the Judiciary. It is never voted on in the form of a bill.

**June 14, 1995**
The telecommunications bill is passed in the Senate by a vote of 84-16. A slightly modified version of the Exon Bill, co-sponsored by Senators Exon and Dan Coats (R-In.), is included as an amendment in the Senate telecommunications bill. Like the Exon Bill, the Exon Amendment seeks to outlaw obscenity on computer networks, including commercial online services and the Internet. It would impose fines of up to $100,000 or a two-year jail term on anyone making sexually explicit material available to anyone under 18.

**June 30, 1995**
Reps. Christopher Cox (R-Ca.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) introduce their amendment as an alternative to the Exon Amendment. It calls for using technology to screen out unwanted material from the Internet, rather than censorship measures.

**July 28, 1995**
Telecommunications overhaul legislation is passed in the House by a vote of 305-117.

**August 4, 1995**
The House votes 420-4 in favor of approving the Cox-Wyden Internet Freedom and Family Empowerment Act as an amendment to the House Telecommunications Reform Legislation.

**October 25, 1995**
Deliberations by a bi-partisan conference committee to resolve the House and Senate versions of the telecommunications bill begin.

**December 1, 1995**
A compromise is introduced by Rep. Rick White (R-Wash.). It would impose fines and prison terms on anyone who transmits pornography over the Internet, but it also weakens the description of material that would be considered criminal by substituting "harmful to children" for "indecent."

The House take on cyberporn seems to have more support across the board. It's more middle-of-the-road than the Senate bill, in that it steers clear of the Orwellian-Big Brother approach of the Senate. As a *Washington Post* editorial said in favor of the House bill: "The basic argument is simple: the Internet isn't a phone system or a broadcast medium but something vastly more flexible and intricate. Trying to saw it up into sectors and criminalize some of those sectors can only paralyze its still galloping expansion."

In early December, just as this issue went to press, it was announced that a compromise piece of legislation had been drafted just as the House-Senate conference committee was set to debate the Exon Amendment.

In the compromise, introduced by Rep. Rick White (R-Wash.), fines and prison sentences would still be imposed on those who transmit pornography. But the language describing the kind of material that would be considered criminal if made available to children would change from "indecent" to "harmful to children." There would also be protection for online services or content providers that make a "good-faith" effort to keep sexual material away from children. It was expected that most of the online services, which have lobbied against the Exon Amendment, would agree to the compromise.

To stay up-to-date, see the sites listed below.

## Sites to Keep You Informed about the Cyberporn Legislative Debate

The Exon Amendment fomented a wave of homepages, petitions, activist information, and more as people sought to argue for and against it. "What you can do" sections are readily found on any page that mentions the debate. Several organizations have very informative summaries on the issue that are updated frequently, to keep you in step with the unpredictable pace of government.

**Center for Democracy and Technology's Communications Decency Act page**
http://www.cdt.org/cda.html

**Cyber-Rights: U.S. Telecommunications Bill Fails to Serve the Public Interest**
http://www.cpsr.org/cpsr/nii/cyber-rights/telecom.html

**EFFector, a publication of the Electronic Frontier Foundation**
http://www.eff.org/effector.txt

**Information on the "Communications Decency Act"**
http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~hwh6k/public/S314_stuff.html

**NetPolitics**
http://pathfinder.com/@@jidJyIFLMwMAQK5Y/pathfinder/politics/netpol/index.html

**Radio Stories on Telecom and Exon**
http://www.well.com/user/srhodes/telecom.html

**Update on the Telecommunications Bill**
http://www.access.digex.net/~cme/billupdates.html

**Voters Telecommunications Watch**
http://www.vtw.org

## Debating the Issue of Censorship on the Net: **Pro** and **Con**

### Web Sites:

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses of the Internet**
gopher://riceinfo.rice.edu:1170/11/More/Acceptable

**American Civil Liberties Union**
gopher://aclu.org.6601/

**Cato Foundation's Account of History of Censorship in the U.S.**
http://www.cato.org/main/pa232.html

**Censorship and Intellectual Freedom**
http://bronze.ucs.indiana.edu/~quinnjf/censor.html

**Censorship on the Internet**
http://dis.strath.ac.uk/people/paul/Control.html

**Censorship Page**
http://www.tcom.ohiou.edu/OU_Language/project censorship.html

**Child Safety on the Info Highway**
http://www.omix.com/magid/child safety.online.html

**Child Safety on the Internet**
http://www.voicenet.com/~cranmer/censorship.html

**Children Accessing Controversial Information**
http://www.zen.org/~brendan/cacl.html

**Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility**
http://www.cpsr.org/dox/home.html

**Computers and Academic Freedom**
http://www.eff.org/CAF/cafuiuc.html

**Electronic Frontier Foundation**
http://www.eff.org/

**Electronic Privacy Information Center**
http://www.epic.org/

**Freedom from Porno**
http://www.stolaf.edu/people/bierein/noxxx/noxxx.html

**Freedom of Expression Links**
http://insight.mcmaster.ca/org/efc/pages/chronicle/censor.html

**Government Censorship**
http://jasper.ora.com/andyo/cyber-rights/free-speech/

**Institute for Media Education**
http://www.uglou.com/first-principles/

**Interactive Services Association**
http://www.isa.net/isa/

**Law and Order Comes to Cyberspace**
http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/t/techreview/www/articles/oct95/Diamond.html

**Platform for Internet Content Selection**
http://www.w3.org/pub/WWW/PICS/

**Telecommunications: Law, Policy, and Society**
http://www.uark.edu/depts/comminfo/www/tecomm.html

### Related Articles Online:

**"The Cyberporn Fallout: Publishing on the Edge"**
http://sunsite.unc.edu/cmc/mag/1995/aug/schmeiser.html

**"Target: Cyberspace" from the Playboy Forum**
http://www.playboy.com/forum/target.html

**"Debate continues to heat up over sex on the Net"**
http://www.sjmercury.com/netmyth.htm

**"Filtering Out the Naughty Bits"**
http://pathfinder.com/@@opfVsWHPMQMAQKZU/t.me/magazine/domestic/1995/950703/950703.cover.naughtybits.html

### Mailing List:

**American Civil Liberties Union's Cyber-Liberty Update**

**To subscribe:** send an e-mail message to **infoaclu@aclu.org** with "subscribe ACLU" in the subject line of your message.

# Software Guardians: White Knights for Concerned Parents

*Wayne Cunningham*

As everyone who's been on the Internet knows, there's lots of sexually explicit content there that might not be appropriate for every cyber visitor, particularly those who are under 18. The resulting outcry has opened up a whole new market — for "safe surf" software capable of restricting access to areas that might be considered obscene.

The philosophy behind safe surf software complements the net's history of open standards: It keeps the power in the hands of the user. Technology companies have jumped on the bandwagon of safe surf software, fearing the long arm of the law, and the now-infamous Exon Amendment, which would put legal restrictions on what we are allowed to see.

The defining question here is, should the government or the individual decide what is obscene? A look at the various safe surf software products that have been developed reveals that things, as usual, aren't quite so black and white.

### Keeping Power in the Hands of the User

The software that comes closest to the ideal of keeping control in the hands of the user employs a user-defined database of restricted resources.

This means users must enter in all the sites they don't want to have accessed from their computer. While this gives the user complete control, it seems somewhat unreasonable to expect people to go and visit every site and resource on the Internet, and log everything that might bother their children.

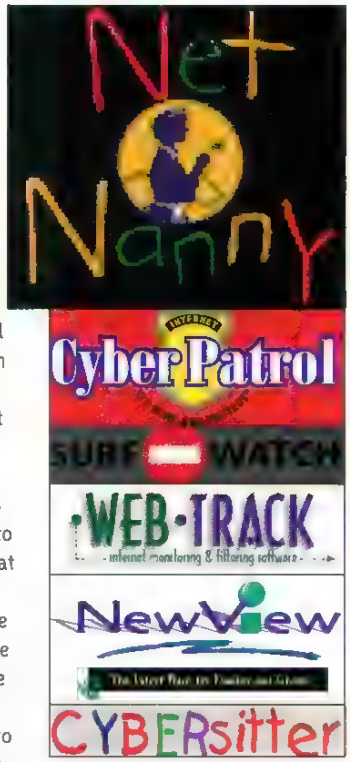
Two other methods that keep control in the hands of the user are time restrictions and file format restrictions. A product that employs time restrictions allows the user to control when and for how long each day the Internet can be accessed.

This is a very useful method of control, but alone, it can't accomplish the intended mission of keeping children away from adult sites. File format restrictions allow the user to determine what types of files can be downloaded from the Internet.

This is primarily useful for preventing graphics from being downloaded. However, so many Web sites are relying on graphics for navigation and information that this restriction makes the Web pretty useless, and doesn't even address what sort of text is available.

### Pre-Existing Restrictions

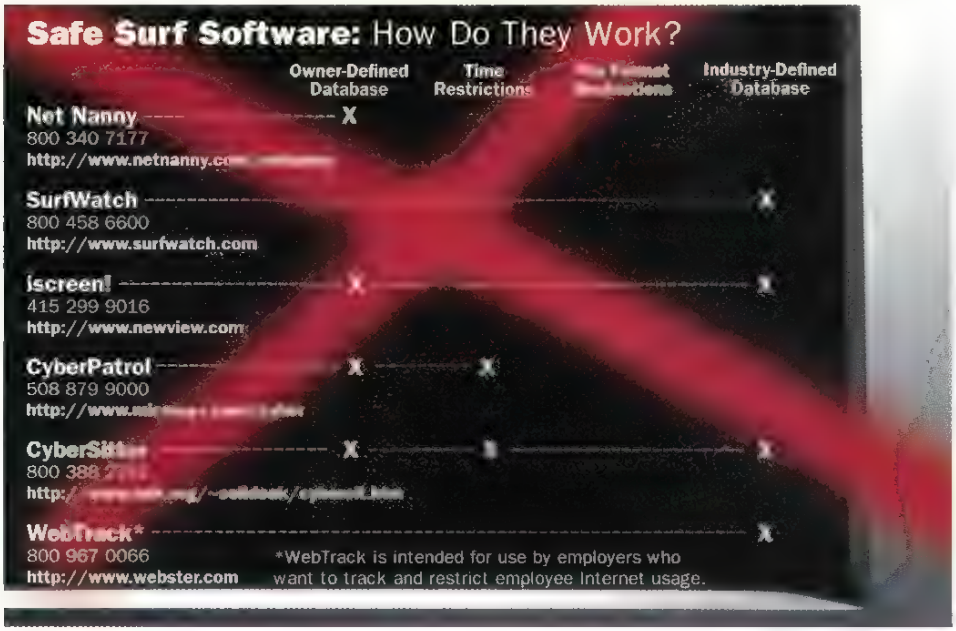
The filtering tactic that seems to be most popular is software that comes with a pre-existing database of restricted sites. The companies that offer these have searched the Internet for all the areas they think that parents might not want their children to have access to, and logged the addresses. Many of these products also offer continual updates to the database, which circumvents the problem that databases remain static while the Internet continues to evolve and change.




While this method does not put the power to censor in the hands of the government, it does place it squarely in the hands of private industry.

Probably the ideal circumstance in which children would use the Internet would be in the presence of an adult, who would be ready to explain to them what they've come across and prevent them from going to places that might not be appropriate.

But this kind of constant attention isn't very realistic, as any parent would attest to. Software is supposed to make our time more effective, so this would seem to be another area where it can help.



# Will Tennessee Author the Internet Moral Standard?

*David Sobel*

When Robert and Carleen Thomas began operating an adult-oriented bulletin board system located in Milpitas, CA, they assumed their business was legal. They reasoned that so long as the system's content fell within the moral standards of the relatively liberal Bay Area community in which they resided, they'd be fine. They were wrong. The Thomases were prosecuted and convicted in Memphis, TN after prosecutors there logged onto the BBS and downloaded images deemed pornographic in that Bible-belt community. It was the first time law enforcement authorities prosecuted a BBS operator in the locale where the material was received, rather than where it originated. "This case would never have gone to trial in California," says Richard Williams, the couple's defense attorney. (More information on the Thomas case can be found at **http://www.spectacle.org/795/amateur.html**).

The case, now on appeal, raises significant questions about the applicability of a 1973 Supreme Court opinion holding that obscenity must be judged by local community standards. What do "local" and "community" mean in cyberspace?

The issue is important to anyone who makes content available on the Internet. Are you subject to local laws and community standards, or might some other, more conservative jurisdiction pass judgment on your digital offerings and seek prosecution? Will the legislators of one state — say, Tennessee — decide what is acceptable content for the entire Internet?

### States Write

While all eyes were focused on Congress as it considered the so-called "Exon Amendment" and other federal proposals to ban "indecent" speech on the net, 1995 was actually a bad year for electronic rights in state legislatures around the U.S. No fewer than nine states passed laws designed to regulate speech on the Internet. Similar measures were enacted in Georgia, Kansas, Montana, and New Jersey. These states were not the only ones to address the issue; they were simply the first to put new laws on the books.

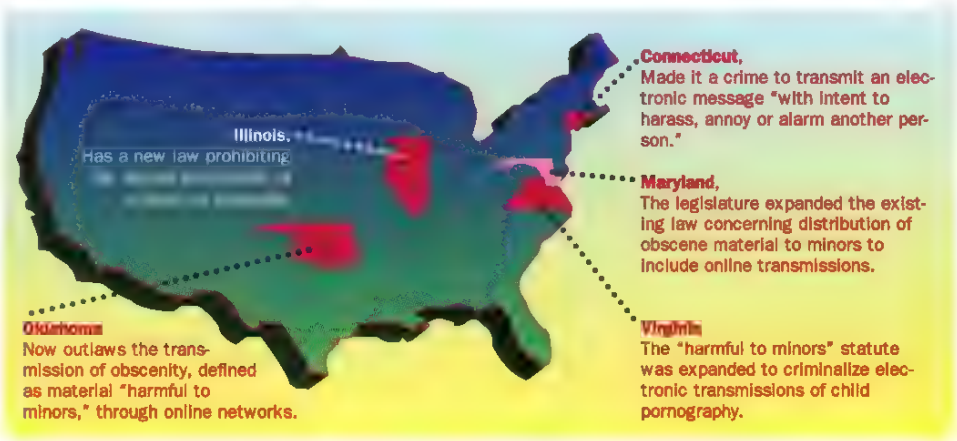
Legislation to regulate online speech was also introduced in Alabama, California, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Only in the Pacific Northwest did it appear that cooler heads would prevail in reaction to the "computer porn" hysteria; a legislative committee in Oregon rejected an electronic obscenity measure, and the governor vetoed a digital "harmful to minors" bill in Washington state.

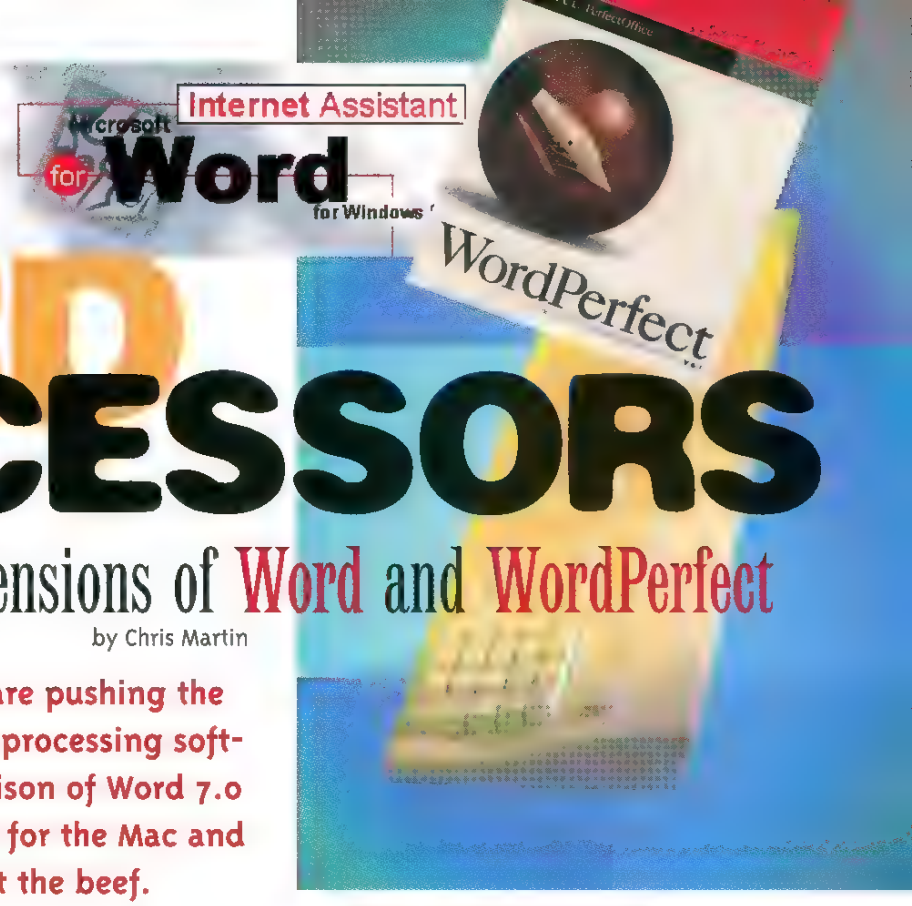
While some people might find these measures a reasonable approach to online abuses, the new state laws purporting to regulate the Internet are every bit as troubling as the better-known proposed federal legislation. For one thing, *any* new restrictions — state or federal — are unnecessary. Lost in all the hysteria is the fact that existing federal law adequately protects against the manufacture and distribution of child pornography (the one category of obscenity that most people find objectionable). Any doubt on that point was removed this past September, when the FBI conducted a series of raids around the country as part of an investigation involving alleged trafficking of child pornography via America Online. While the AOL investigation raises some sticky civil liberties issues, it demonstrates that federal law enforcement agencies have all the authority they need to investigate and prosecute the transmission of obscene material in appropriate cases.

New federal legislation would adversely impact free speech on the net. State attempts to regulate online content will muddy the waters even more as they seek to impose dozens of subjective, local standards on a global communications environment. Many of the recently enacted state statutes criminalize the transmission of information deemed "harmful to minors." Even residents of Oklahoma may not have a clear idea of what their own state's law now prohibits. But what if you live in Vermont? How can you possibly be expected to know what type of material is considered to be "harmful to minors" in Oklahoma? This is no hypothetical question; anyone with the most basic knowledge of the Internet can be said to have knowingly transmitted information into Oklahoma by simply hitting the "send" button in Vermont and posting to a Usenet newsgroup.

Suppose you decide to play it safe and not "send" anything at all, but merely make material available at your own Web site or BBS, which is physically located in your home state, where you know the rules. Talk to Robert and Carleen Thomas.

Will the content on your homepage become subject to Tennessee's community standards? Or Utah's, or Alabama's, or Virginia's? The proliferation of "online indecency" laws will have a palpably chilling effect on electronic speech and expression. The vibrant, provocative environment we've come to know may pass into memory. ■






# WEB PROCESSORS

## Using the HTML Extensions of Word and WordPerfect

by Chris Martin

**While both Microsoft and Novell are pushing the HTML-ability of their latest word processing software, this head-to-head comparison of Word 7.0 for Windows 95 and WordPerfect for the Mac and Windows reveals who's really got the beef.**

To create HTML documents, it used to be that you needed a head full of arcane commands and the concentration of a Guatemalan basket weaver. The titans of word processing are working to change that by providing Web-nauts with neatly integrated HTML features. In this head-to-head comparison, *The Net* attempts to guide you into the light. I'll compare the HTML-ability of **Microsoft Word 7.0 for Windows 95** and Novell's **WordPerfect** (version 6.1 for Windows and 3.5 for the Mac).

To evaluate these products, I decided to create a multi-page Web site for a fictitious company called "My Little Company." My plan of attack was to see how easy (or difficult) it was to create a site that includes multiple pages with links to itself and the outside world.

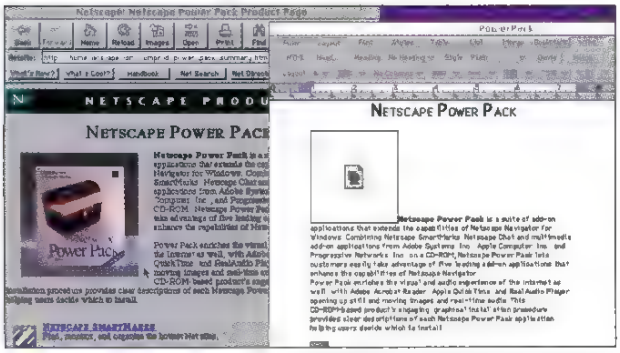
### HTML In — HTML Out

My first task was to create a simple opening page that includes my company logo and some opening remarks. I wanted the text to wrap around my logo, but lacked the HTML brain bits to do that. I'd seen the wrapping effect on Netscape's page (**http://www.netscape.com/**), so I decided to download the source information and see how good each product's HTML import capabilities were.

Sadly, none of the products was able to sustain the wrapping effect. This was because each lacks support for complex and/or unsupported HTML codes. The rule of thumb is: The simpler the page, the better it'll look when imported. **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** did the best job in maintaining the look of the rest of the document as it appeared in Netscape. **WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows** could only import the ASCII text version of an HTML document for direct editing of HTML tags. **Word 7.0** opened the page to a jumble of HTML code and text.

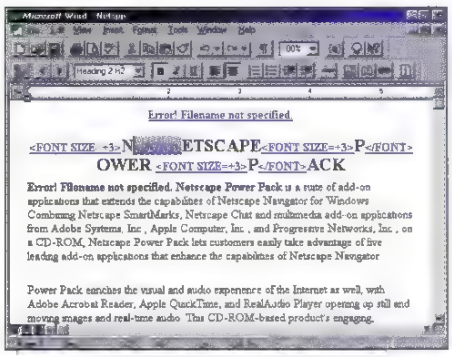
In terms of exporting, all three products easily converted the existing word processing documents into HTML. This is a boon for companies considering moving to a Web-centric document distribution method, as well as for individuals who want one-step, simple page-making capability.

### WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac




**WordPerfect 3.5 did the best job of importing HTML source code. On the left is the Netscape version; on the right is the imported version.**

### Word 7.0 for Windows 95




**Here's how the HTML source code looked after being imported into Word 7.0.**

### Word 7.0 for Windows 95

### WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac

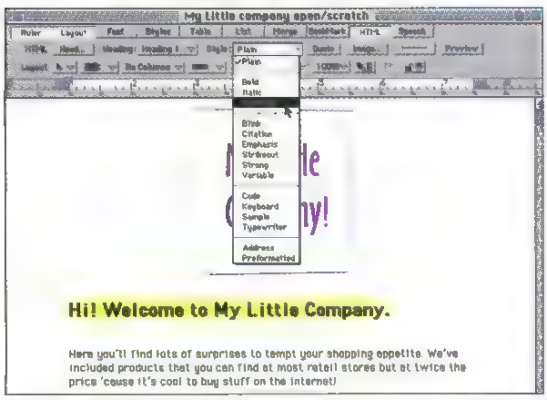
### WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows

## Button Bar Basics for Building HTML Documents

Since I couldn't get the effect I wanted, I decided it was time to try the clean-slate approach. Each application provides convenient button bars to build and edit pages. These bars include features for changing text headings and styles, as well as placing graphic elements and creating hyperlinks.

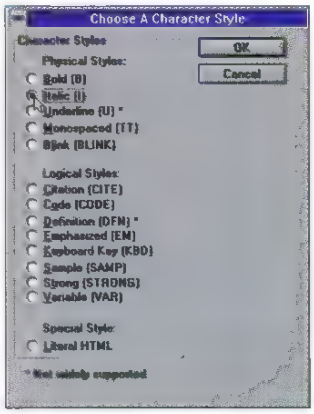
To the left are examples of each of the button bars.

### WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac




WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac was the only product lacking the ability to format lists and text as literal HTML code.

### WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows




## Options for Text

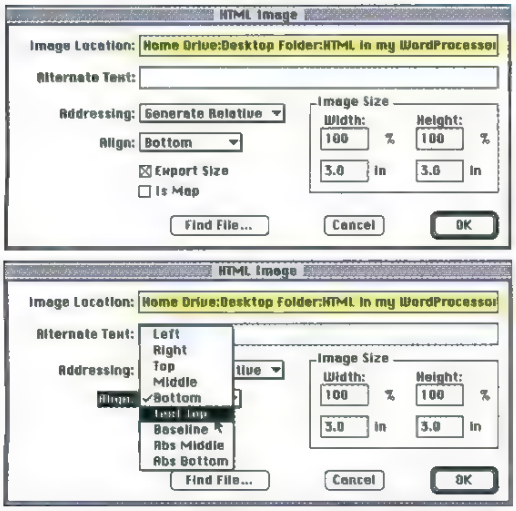
All three products include various text-formatting options for headings and text styles (bold, italic, blinking, etc.).

Only **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** did not include the ability to format lists and text as literal HTML code.

One word of advice for text formatting: Stay within the confines of the specific HTML tools given.

If you don't, your text formatting may not convert properly to HTML code.

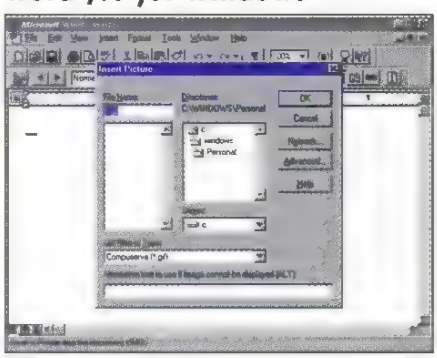
### WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac




WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac has an alignment option with the graphic import dialog box.

I went about placing my company logo on the first page with relative ease. All three word processing systems pro-

### Word 7.0 for Windows



There's an image search function in Word 7.0 that facilitates placing graphics on your Web page.

## Options for Graphics

vide an alignment option with the graphic import dialog. One disappointment was that **WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows** showed only a placeholder for my graphic, while **Word 7.0** and **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** previewed the actual image.

Also, the dialog box for importing graphics in **WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows** does not provide a search function, so you're stuck with writing down the file names of your graphics and entering them.

All three products support graphics as image maps.

# Go to the Source

**A Sampling of HTML Editors Available on the Net (and they won't cost a fortune)**

### MAC

**HTML.edit** -- freeware
http://ogopogo.nttc.edu/tools/HTMLedit/HTMLedit.html

**BBEdit HTML Extensions** -- freeware (extensions to BBEdit text processor)
http://www.uji.es/bbedit-html-extensions.html

**HTML Editor** -- $25 shareware
http://dragon.acadiau.ca/~giles/HTML_Editor/Documentation.html

### WINDOWS

**HTML Easy! Pro**
http://www.seed.net.tw/~milkylin/htmleasy.html
OR
http://www.trytel.com/~milkylin/htmleasy.html

**HTML Writer**
http://lal.cs.byu.edu/people/nosack/

### DOS

**WPTOHTML** (translator for DOS WordPerfect 5.1)
ftp://oak.oakland.edu/SimTel/msdos/wordperf/wpt51d10.zip

**WPTOHTML** (translator for DOS WordPerfect 6)
ftp://oak.oakland.edu/SimTel/msdos/wordperf/wpt60d10.zip

For a good list of HTML editors for Windows, check out **Gabriel's HTML Editor site** (http://luff.atrobe.edu.au/~medgjw/editors/). For detailed reviews of mostly Windows HTML editors, visit **Carl Davis' HTML Editor Reviews site** at http://www.techsmith.com/community/htmlrev/index.html.

A great resource for downloading HTML editors is **Mag's Big List of HTML Editors** (http://union.ncsa.uiuc.edu/HyperNews/get/www/html/editors.html).

## More Formatting Assistance

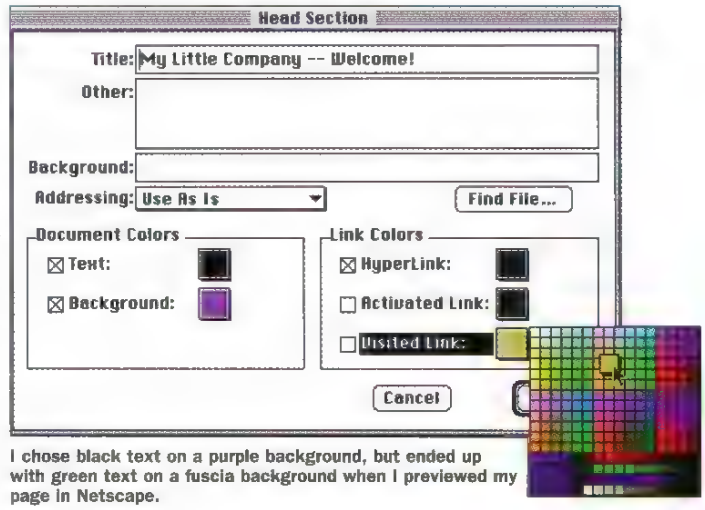
**WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** and **Word 7.0** also provide head-section configuration for specifying background color and/or pattern and page titles, and link colors.

I did have some trouble using **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** to assign colors to text and the background. I chose black text on a purple background. When I previewed it in Netscape, though, the document had green text on a fuscia background. An ultra-helpful technician from WordPerfect experienced the same problem and has reported the color "flakiness" (I guess that's a bug).

I tried the same task in **Word 7.0** and was pleased to discover that my color choices were intact once they were exported to HTML.

Overall, I found **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** and **Word 7.0** the easiest to use for page construction. The button bars were simple to navigate, and I was confident that my page was maintaining a WYSIWIG (What You See Is What You Get) layout even during construction. **WordPerfect 6.1** failed in my book because the graphic elements were merely placeholders that threw me off, which meant that I had to look at the exported HTML document too many times.

**WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac**




**I chose black text on a purple background, but ended up with green text on a fuscia background when I previewed my page in Netscape.**

# The HTML Editors at a Glance

| | Microsoft Word 7.0 for Windows 95 | Novell's WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows | Novell's WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Import Capabilities** | | | |
| Sustains text-wrapping | no | no | |
| Maintains the look of the HTML document as it appeared in Netscape | no | Only able to import the ASCII text version | |
| **Export Capabilities** | | | |
| Converts word processing documents into HTML | yes | yes | |
| **Building HTML Documents** | | | |
| Formats lists and text as literal HTML code | yes | yes | |
| Graphic import dialog has alignment option | yes | yes | yes |
| Provides preview of image | yes | no | yes |
| Dialog box for importing graphics has search function | yes | no | no |
| Able to correctly assign colors to text and background | yes | no | no |
| Easy to navigate button bars | yes | no | yes |
| Good link handling | yes | yes | |
| Has previewing capability | yes | yes | |

# DON'T BE ALARMED!

## The time

up-to-date news

equipment reviews

cutting-edge features

the hottest sites galore

You dream of being an expert surfer... know exactly where you want to go and how to get there, building and maintaining your very own Web page, exploring the best that the Internet has to offer, securing world peace—**WAKE UP!** In actuality, you need help. Your modem dates back to the Mesozoic period. Your online service provider also sells pool equipment. And after the first ten hours on the Internet, you acquired three raspberry jam recipes, which is great, except that you were looking for used car dealers in the area.

## Links Galore

To appease link-thirsty browsees, I included several additional pages in my site, such as one containing links to other sites. All three products provide the ability to create links to any Internet address, text, or graphic document.

The link-handling features of **WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac** are outstanding. To assign a link, all I had to do was highlight the text or graphic I wanted to use as the link and choose "Create" from the "Hyperlink" menu.

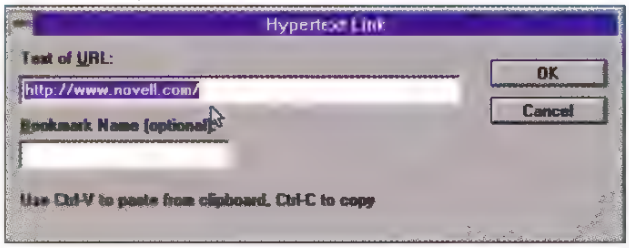
A dialog box is presented; here you choose the document or URL to link to. The hyperlinks can also be switched on and off so that you can edit the link. If the link is turned on and you click on it, the document or address it's linked to opens.

WordPerfect even prompts you to select your browser of choice if none is currently open. Having the ability to link to other WordPerfect documents made composing and testing my mini-site a snap. I was also able to drag-copy links from imported documents.

Making links in **Word 7.0** is equally breezy. The same link creation method applies, but the choices for links are broader.

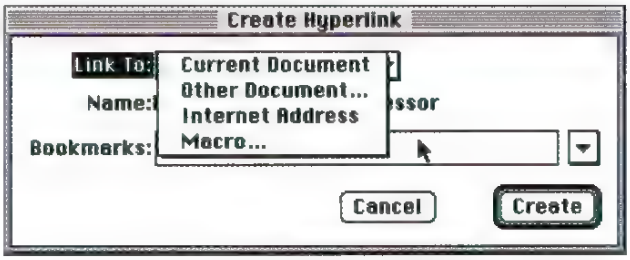
You can choose a link from a list of previous URLs, or insert a graphic image as a link directly, instead of placing the image and then formatting it as a link.

### Word 7.0 for Windows 95



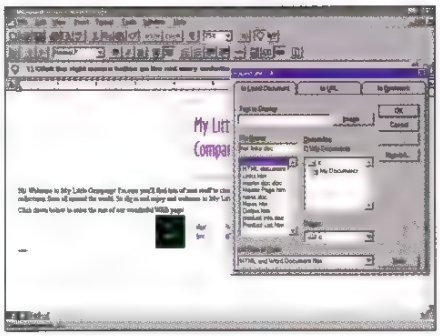

**Word 7.0 has wonderful link-handling features; you'll find it a breeze to make links on your Web site.**

### WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac




**There are excellent link-handling features in WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac that make assigning a link as easy as one-two-three.**

### WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows



**WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows fell short in its link-making capabilities: You have to type in each URL by hand — a pain, believe me.**

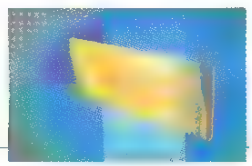
**WordPerfect 6.1** for Windows again falls short, since you must type in URLs manually — a royal pain, as you may expect.

## Taking the Plunge

**WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac:**
*Sells for $129.95 on CD or diskette.*
WordPerfect provides an introductory six-month unlimited support period (which also includes tips and advice on building Web documents with its HTML features).

**WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows:**
*Sells for $269.95 on CD, or $279.95 on diskette*
WordPerfect Internet Publisher is a free add-on for registered users of WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows. It's available from **http://www.wordperfect.com.**

**Microsoft's Internet Assistant for Word 7.0:**
Microsoft's Internet Assistant for Word can be downloaded from **http://www.microsoft.com/msoffice/freestuf/msword/download/ia/default.htm.** Word 7.0 for Windows 95 sells for $319.95 on diskette.



## Previewing

Obviously, all this work means nothing if you can't examine your document in all its Web glory. **WordPerfect** on both platforms provides a copy of Netscape Navigator 1.1 for previewing your documents (yes, it's a genuine license). Just a click of a button, and **WordPerfect** exports your document to HTML and opens Netscape for viewing. **Word 7.0** contains a preview button that switches to its own browser view. I preferred the **WordPerfect** approach, since it felt more secure to me to view my document in the browser most people would be using rather than the one built into Word.

## Choosy HTML Users

For Windows users seeking to create new pages with text and graphics, the best product is **Word 7.0**. If your primary use is to translate existing word processing documents that are not graphic-intensive, then either **Word 7.0** or **WordPerfect 6.1** should do.

For Mac owners, **WordPerfect 3.5** is a gem. It provides a solid foundation of HTML features that are easy to use and learn (and it's a darn fine word processor, too). I was not able to confirm if Microsoft is working on a version of the Internet Assistant for its Macintosh product.

I wouldn't recommend running out to buy these products to use solely for HTML editing. I think they're worthy add-ons to your word processor, and provide a great introduction for working with Web documents, but you can find most of this functionality in HTML editors on the Internet, many of which are freeware (see page 62).

If you're looking to upgrade your word processor, then by all means get one that can do HTML. In the near future, it'll be a standard on all word processors. There's nothing wrong with being the first on your block. ■

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ACTIVATION CODE
5FWR7

# WEB DESIGN-O-RAMA
# FUN WITH ALIGNMENT

**Use HTML and HTML extensions to align text and images for optimally creative Web design.**

by Lynda Weinman

Imagine you had to design a document but no one could tell you the size of the paper you had to work with. Also imagine that the tools to align text and graphics were strange and unintuitive, and didn't create the same result on the different pieces of paper. These problems are typical of the design challenges faced by today's Web designers.

A Web page has no fixed size. On Macintoshes, Netscape's opening screen defaults to 505 pixels across. If you want to design your opening graphic so it fits within this size, without forcing your Mac-based viewers to change the window size of their browser, a 480-pixels width is a safe choice for an opening graphic or headline. That's the approximate width of the menu bar for Netscape's homepage.

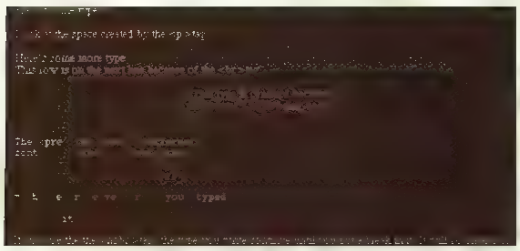
There are no length restrictions on a Web document, though longer documents take more time for users to download. If you want your opening graphic to be visible on most computer monitors, it should be no taller than 350 pixels, since most portable computer screens today are either 640-by-480 or 640-by-400.

Here's a look at the standard HTML alignment tags, with visual examples of how they look on a Web page using Netscape.

## HTML TEXT ALIGNMENT TAGS

These tags support the alignment of text:

**<p> Paragraph breaks:** Insert this tag where you want vertical spaces between paragraphs.



This is an example of the HTML text alignment tags in action.

**<p><p><p> Multiple paragraph breaks:** Use the "p" tag as many times as you wish to create the right number of spaces between lines. (In this example, you would generate three vertical spaces.)

**<br> Line breaks:** Put this tag where you want the text to wrap around to the next line.

** Centered text:** Use the first tag ( ) before you center text and/or images, and the closed tag ( ) when you want text below it to return to left-justified formatting.

**<pre></pre> Pre-formatted text:** This tag lets you set the spacing and indents of your type. Pre-formatted text typically uses a different font, like a typewriter style Courier, instead of the default Times Roman.

**<nobr></nbr> No break:** Use this tag if you want the browser width to dictate where the text breaks. The closed tag signifies when you want the no-break formatting to end.

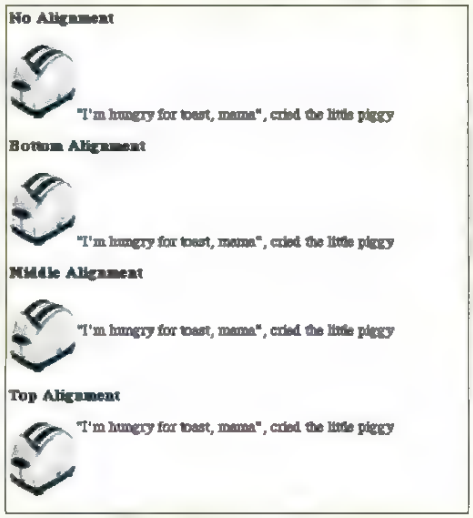
## HTML IMAGE ALIGNMENT TAGS

The following tags cause the text to align in relationship to the image it's next to:

**<img src=filenamehere.gif align=top>**
Align text to the top of your image.

**<img src=filenamehere.gif align=bottom>**
Align text to the bottom of your image.

**<img src=filenamehere.gif align=middle>**
Align text to the middle of your image.




The three image/text tags discussed in action.

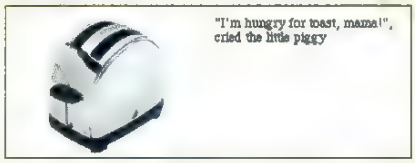
As we've shown here, using HTML for alignment is one method to align text and visual elements on a Web page. Web designers define the size of a Web page by the size of the graphics and the amount of text placed on each page. Understanding the default sizes of browsers can help you make educated decisions about how wide or tall to make your graphics. The amount of text and graphics on a page affects download time, and should be used economically. But trying to use standard HTML tags for page layout can be an exercise in frustration. There are so few options, it's a wonder there are any well-designed Web sites out there.

One of the reasons why we actually do find interesting Web page layout is because Netscape pioneered a series of HTML extensions that addressed the lack of alignment tags. These tags have become widely accepted, and most of the popular Web browsers now recognize them, too.

## V-SPACE AND H-SPACE ALIGNMENT TAGS

These tags allow you to insert empty vertical or horizontal space around a graphic, thereby creating "breathing" room for the image. Here's an example of how to use the "hspace=value" to put 40 pixels of breathing room to the left and right of the toaster image:

```
<html>
<head> <title> Alignment Test</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="ffffff">
<img src="toast.jpg" align=left
hspace=40>"I'm hungry for toast, mama!",
<br>cried the little piggy.<br clear=all>
</body>
</html>
```




**Using an hspace value of 40, you give your image 40 pixels of breathing room on its left and righ.**

This next example of code demonstrates the effects of using the "vspace=value" to add vertical space to a graphic:

```
<html>
<head> <title>
Alignment
Test</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor=<ffffff">
<img src="toast.jpg" align=left hspace=40
vspace=80>"I'm hungry for toast, mama!",
<br>cried the little piggy.<br clear=all>
</body>
</html>
```

**Using the <vspace=value> tag lowered the graphic by 80 pixels. Because there's also an <hspace=value> tag of 40 pixels, the image still has left and right "breathing" room around it.**

## WIDTH AND HEIGHT TAGS

The width and height tags work by allowing you to specify the width and height values (in pixels) of a graphic. This causes the text on the page to load before the graphic, while making space for the graphic to come into the proper location. If you put smaller values in these tags, they will shrink your image; conversely, if you put larger values in the tags, they will scale it up. The actual dimension of the toaster image is 102-by-115 pixels.

By putting a width of 53 and a height of 60, the image is reduced to half its size. By putting a value of 240-by-214, it's scaled twice as big. The following coding sequences illustrate these alignment tags:

```
<html>
<head> <title> Alignment Test</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="ffffff">
<img src="toast.jpg" width=60 height=53
align=left>"I'm hungry for toast, mama!",
<br>cried the little piggy.<br >
<p>
<p>
<img src="toast.jpg" width=240
height=214 align=left>"I'm hungry for
toast, mama!", <br>cried the little
piggy.<br >
</body>
</html>
```

**One small toaster and one big toaster, courtesy of height and width tags.**

This exhausts the possibilities HTML tags offer for alignment. There are some new tags in proposal stage for HTML 3.0, but so far, they're unsupported.

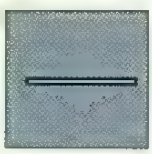
## ARTWORK AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO HTML ALIGNMENT TAGS

Next, we move on to alignment techniques that don't rely on the use of HTML. These involve making custom artwork that serves to align images, rather than relying on code.

Using images for alignment involves creating "spacer" art. This art exists on the Web page for the sole purpose of making spaces between text and images. For the spacer art to be invisible, you have two options:

1. You can make the spacer art the same color as your page. To do this, use the "body bgcolor" tag or create a solid color pattern, using the "body background" tag, or both.

2. Make your spacer art one color, designate that color as transparent, then save the one-color artwork as a transparent GIF.



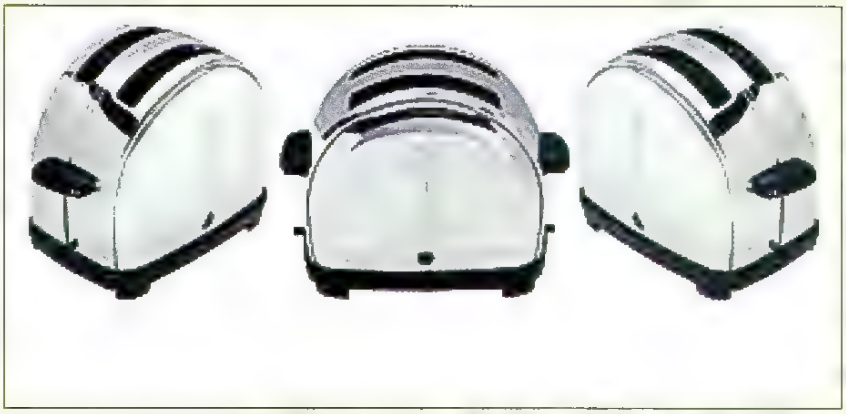
**Here's an example of a "spacer" image. It need only be 1-pixel high if all it's meant to do is create horizontal space. You might do the opposite if it was created to produce vertical space.**

## USING SPACERS FOR ALIGNMENT

The following demonstrates what standard HTML code would produce if you didn't use any spacers or alignment techniques.

The toaster photographs are from a CD-ROM collection from Classic PIO Partners (classicpio@aol.com). I've named the artwork ltoast.jpg, ftoast.jpg, and rtoast.jpg, respectively.

```
<html>
<head> <title> Alignment Test</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="ffffff">
<img src="ltoast.jpg"><img
src="ftoast.jpg"><img src="rtoast.jpg">
</body>
</html>
```



Here's how the toasters would look if you used the code above: they would touch each other.

The following is the HTML code required to use white spacer art between the images to give them a little breathing room.

The artwork was made in Photoshop, and is 40-pixels wide and 1-pixel high, and named 40space.jpg.

```
<html>
<head> <title> Alignment Test</title> </head>
<body bgcolor="ffffff">
<img src="40space.jpg"><img src="ltoast.jpg"><img src="40space.jpg"><img
src="ftoast.jpg"><img src="40space.jpg"><img src="rtoast.jpg">
</body>
</html>
```

Now here's how the three toasters look after we've put space between them.

If the same spacer art is used in front of each image, a consistent left indent would result, as shown in the image to the right:

```
<html>
<head> <title> Alignment Test</title> </head>
<body bgcolor="ffffff">
<img src="40space.jpg"><img
src="ltoast.jpg">
<p><img src="40space.jpg"><img
src="ftoast.jpg">
<p><img src="40space.jpg"><img
src="rtoast.jpg">
</body>
</html>
```

So, you see, it *is* possible to do more advanced layout using HTML extension tags introduced by Netscape. For more challenging alignment tasks, making invisible spacer art does the trick nicely, too.

The three toasters with a consistent left indent.

### FACT BOX:

- Here are a couple of URLs that describe alignment tag extensions and use of the invisible spacer art trick:

**David Seigal's Alignment Tips**
http://www.dsiegel.com/tips/wonk5/single.html

**Creating High Impact Documents — Netscape's Instruction on Using Image Sizing Tags**
http://home.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/impact_docs/index.htm

- If you want to stay on top of HTML 3.0 announcements, visit this site:

http://www.hp.co.uk/people/dsr/html3/CoverPage.html

***Lynda Weinman*** *teaches Interactive Media Design, Motion Graphics, and Web Design at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. She's a writer for a number of graphic and computer trade magazines, and has just finished her first book, Designing Web Graphics (New Riders Publishing, ISBN: 1-56205-532-1). Her Web site is located at* **http://www.earthlink. net/~lyndaw**, *and has lots of useful links to other Web design resources.* ■

# REAL-TIME MULTI-PARTY VIDEO CONFERENCING: A BASIC GUIDE TO CU-SEEME

**Here's what you need to know to use the net for direct one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many video conferencing, whether for fun or for work.**

by Crystal Waters

You've seen the AT&T commercials with the mom tucking in her baby over a video phone, right? Or the ads with kids from around the world talking to one another through television or computer screens? Well, CU-SeeMe — a desktop video conferencing application that uses the Internet as a transmission vehicle — lacks the glamorous quality these advertisements promise, but it's a tremendous application that takes advantage of technology that exists today. It also can be used at minimal cost. The software (still in beta), was developed by and is available for free from Cornell University (**ftp://gated.cornell.edu/pub/video/html/Welcome.html**). It allows direct one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many conferencing depending on your hardware setup — and, of course, what you want to do with it.

## TURN YOUR MAC OR PC INTO A VIDEO PHONE

The most brilliant aspect of CU-SeeMe is not that it's a low cost way to set up a send-and-receive station, but the fact that if you have an IP connection (either through PPP or via a direct Internet connection, such as through a T1 line), you're ready to connect as soon as you launch the application.

For one-to-one transmission, such as conferencing with someone in your office, both you and the party you conference with need your hardware configured properly (see Tech Specs, page 70). Also, CU-SeeMe must be installed. One of you must know the IP number of the other computer you want to connect to. Type in the IP address into the "Connect To" dialog box (under the "Conference" menu), and both of you should see each other on the other's screen.

However, it's more fascinating to communicate with many people at once. Right now, in order to have more than one-to-one communications, all parties must communicate via a "reflector site," or a site set up to act as a host site in which many people can gather. The CU-SeeMe reflector is Unix software that currently runs only on Sun Sparc workstations. Reflector sites are set up all around the world — however, it's always a good idea to send a note to a reflector site administrator as a courtesy. If you want to test CU-SeeMe, you can use Cornell's reflector, which is set up at IP address 132.236.91.204.

**The CU-SeeMe site offers lots of information, tips, and help.**

## CAVEATS

While CU-SeeMe is a cool way to communicate (if nothing else), there are still problems with using video and audio transmissions over the net. First of all, video and sound take up a lot more bandwidth as they travel through the wires. As use of this kind of technology increases, transmissions in general over the Internet will be affected. Even with the high bandwidth of a T1 line, I rarely, if ever, received more than five frames per second of video from other CU-SeeMe users (real-time video, such as what we see when we watch a video tape, is 30 frames per second). Voice and other audio also consistently broke up on reception.

Modem users will have more problems than those on ISDN or T1 lines. Transmissions can be almost useless at 14.4 modem speeds (and audio won't work at 14.4), with only a bit of improvement at 28.8.

One way to help everyone get by within these limitations is to "be kind to the Internet," as they say repeatedly within the many README files associated with CU-SeeMe. As mentioned, general etiquette rules include writing to reflector site administrators and asking permission to use their sites. Limiting the length of one's visits to a reflector site (especially if you haven't written to the site's administrator and asked permission to hang out or have meetings there) is also considered a basic rule.

## YOU WILL

More and more sites are inviting people to come hang out at their reflector. One that's received a lot of press lately is t@ponline's Virtual Dorm. (To connect, type in **vdorm.taponline.com** in the "Connect To" dialog, rather than an IP number.) At nearly any time of day, you can spy on the members of the virtual dorm household, and if you're not boring, they'll actually talk back to you. For more information, and even some CU-SeeMe help, wander over to the site at **http://www.taponline.com/tap/v-dorm.html**.

Expect to be refused connections, and possibly to see some lewd video images. Just click your close box if that's not what you're looking for. In the meantime, if you've got video input into your computer and an IP connection, try out CU-SeeMe and see what's happening on the other side of someone's screen, or the other side of the world. It's not just "You Will" anymore. You can.

### WHERE TO GET CU-SEEME

**Cornell Web Site:**
ftp://gated.cornell.edu/pub/video/html/Welcome.html

This is also an ideal place to find more information; it includes links to other sites with CU-SeeMe support and information.

**FTP:**
**Server:** CU-SeeMe.cornell.edu
**UserID:** anonymous
**Password:** (none)
**Directory:** /pub/CU-SeeMe

The Local Video window shows what's being broadcast from your site.

Click this button to show or hide the status bar below the Local Video window.

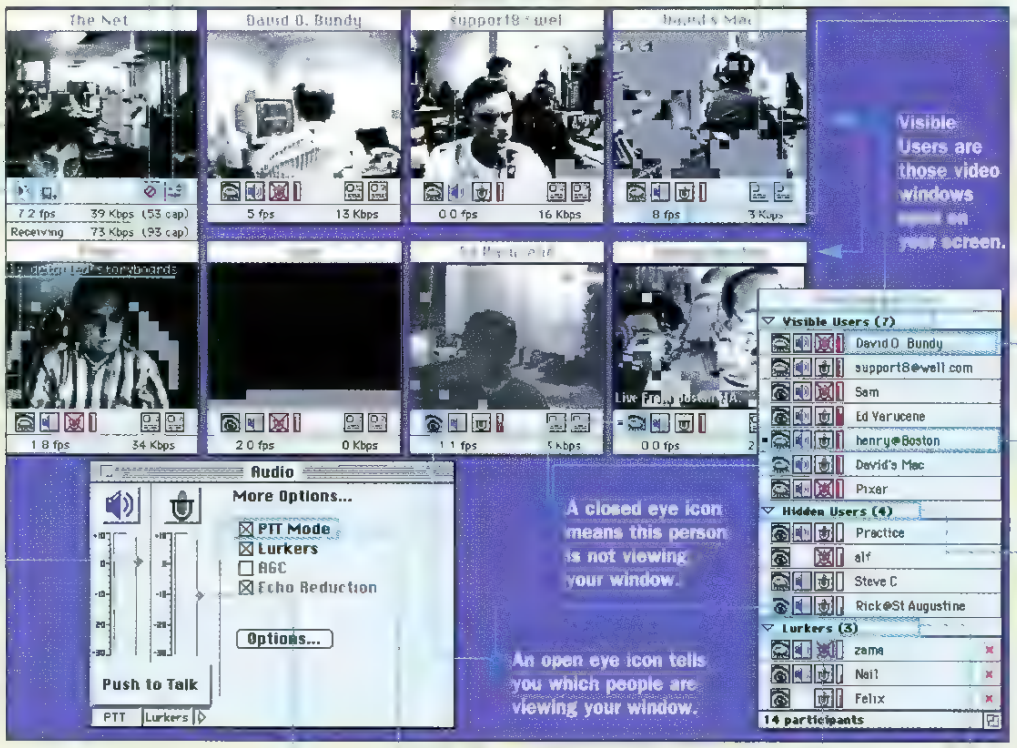
Click here to stop sending video.

This button toggles the transmission options window, such as your light and sound levels, on and off.

If you don't want to receive sound from a user, click on this icon on their window.

The Transmission Statistics window tracks info packets sent, received, and lost, as well as other details.

To find out the IP address of a user, and what version of CU-SeeMe that person is using, click here.




This window is being received at less than one frame per second. Real-time video is 30 frames per second. At transmissions this slow, video is less than perfect.

Click here to flip your local image.

Users' names are set under the Preferences choice in the Edit menu.

This person is transmitting sound (note the small bullet to the left).

Adjust "sound out" here.

Hidden Users are those at the site with video transmission ability, but whose windows you are not watching.

A brief message can be typed onscreen, and displayed either on the top or bottom of the window. Text can remain static, or scroll by pressing the left arrow key (speed up by pressing the left arrow key one more time). To slow or stop text, press the right arrow key.

Adjust "sound in" here.

In "Push To Talk" mode, everything you say is broadcast only when the Push To Talk button is pressed. If your mic is plugged in or a CD is playing, and you are *not* in Push To Talk mode, sound will be broadcast automatically to all who wish to listen.

An x-ed out mic icon shows that this person does not have audio capability.

Lurkers are those users without video transmission capability.

## TECH SPECS

According to the folks at Cornell, here are the hardware specifications for setting up and using CU-SeeMe on your system:

**CU-SeeMe for the MACINTOSH:**

**Specifications to RECEIVE video:**
- Macintosh platform with a 68020 processor or higher
- System 7 or higher operating system (it may run on system 6.0.7 and above)
- Ability to display 16-level grayscale (e.g., any color Mac)
- an IP network connection
- MacTCP
- Current CU-SeeMe application
- Apple's QuickTime, to receive slides with SlideWindow

**Specifications to SEND video:**
- The specifications to receive video mentioned above
- Quicktime installed
- A video digitizer (with vdig software) and Camera

**Possible Sources of Equipment... Supported as of 0.70b13:**
- Video Spigot hardware (street price approx. $380)
- AV-Mac (vdig built into system)
- ComputerEyes/RT SCSI port digitizer

**PLUS:**
- Camera with NTSC 1vpp output (like a camcorder) and RCA cable

OR
- Connectix QuickCam serial port digitizer (with camera)

NOTICE: NO OTHER DIGITIZERS WILL WORK UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**CU-SeeMe for WINDOWS:**

**Basic Requirements:**
- Processor (These are recommendations only)
  - Video receive only: 386SX
  - Video send & receive: 386DX
  - Video receive w/Audio: 486SX
  - Video send & receive w/Audio: 486DX
- Windows 3.1 or higher running in Enhanced Mode
- A Windows Sockets-compliant TCP/IP stack, known as Winsock
- A 256 color (8-bit) video driver at any resolution (640x480, 800x600, 1024x768, or higher).

**To send and receive video you'll also need:**
- Video capture board that supports Microsoft Video for Windows
- A video camera to plug into the video capture board

**To send and receive audio you'll also need:**
- A Windows sound board that conforms to the Windows MultiMedia Specification (Sound Blaster or better). Full Duplex audio is very desirable
- Speakers (or headphones) and a microphone. ■

# FINDING AIDS/HIV RESOURCES ONLINE

**Here we round up a bevy of resources dealing with HIV/AIDS information, because what you don't know really can hurt you.**

by Minda Sandler

Doing searches on the net can be an incredible learning experience, as well as a frustrating, time-consuming, and expensive one. So we've decided to do the searches for you, and gather together resources that you might not be able to easily access. Since our special feature focus this month is sex on the Internet, we thought that, in the cause of responsible journalism, we should highlight the vast number of resources online dealing with HIV/AIDS. These sites were chosen for the amount of educational content they have, in terms of medical and scientific information, clinical trial data, testing resources, and more. Quite a number of sites on the Web are themselves resource lists, designed to link you to other sites.

It became evident as we did our search that there was no comprehensive, overarching, national AIDS/HIV Web site, on the lines of Oncolink (**http://www.oncolink.upenn.edu/**). This University of Pennsylvania site brings together research, clinical trial information, and resources about cancer. As we were about to go to press, though, we learned that the board of the Kaiser Family Foundation, a health care research and policy non-profit group, is considering funding a site that would attempt to be the "mother of all HIV/AIDS resource Web pages," in the words of Mark Smith, executive vice president of KFF. If funded, the site would contain medical management, prevention, and policy information, as well as a searchable clinical trials database. In the meantime, there are lots of amazingly rich sites to assist anyone interested in learning more about AIDS/HIV.

## WORLD WIDE WEB

### GOOD LINK RESOURCES

**AIDS Resource List**
**http://www.teleport.com/~celinec/aids.shtml**

**Einet Galaxy's AIDS and HIV Page**
**http://galaxy.einet.net/galaxy/Community/Health/Diseases/AIDS-and-HIV.html**

**HIVNET/GENA Information Server**
**http://hivnet.org/**

**Marty Howard's HIV/AIDS Homepage**
**http://smartlink.net/~martinjh/#links**

**Other AIDS and HIV Resources**
**http://gpawww.who.ch/aidsinet.htm**

**Queer Resources Directory on AIDS**
**http://www.casti.com/qrd/aids/**

**The Red Ribbon Net**
**http://worldclass.com/redribbn/**

**Virtual Library: AIDS**
**http://www.actwin.com/aids/vl.html**

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**AIDS Information Newsletter**
**http://www.cmpharm.ucsf.edu/~troyer/safesex/vanews/**

This is a biweekly electronic publication from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs AIDS Information Center. It's targeted mainly at health care professionals, librarians, and trainers/educators.

Among the contents when I visited were a 20-part series on "Women and HIV Infection" and a 16-part series on HIV/AIDS in the health care environment. There's also lots of good stuff in the Information for Counselors section.

**Center for AIDS Preventive Studies**
**http://www.epibiostat.ucsf.edu/capsweb/**

This site, established at the University of California, San Francisco, is involved in studying epidemiology and behavior in order to prevent HIV and ensure early intervention in the disease (topics include prevention, education, heterosexual). CAPS has a searchable online bibliography of its 843 publications. There's also news, HIV prevention fact sheets, and a good links list.

**Project Inform**
**http://www.hivnet.org/inform-www/index.html**

Project Inform, founded in San Francisco in 1985, was one of the first groups seeking to unite patients, researchers, and physicians. This site links you to a call-in hotline (800 822 7422), and has good information about antiviral treatments, opportunistic infections, and immune restoration treatments.

There's also Project Inform's newsletter. Project Inform currently is working to transfer its index of about 600 individual subjects — divided into drugs and treatments; diseases; and special focus — into electronic format.

**The Body: A Multimedia AIDS and HIV Information Resource**
**http://www.thebody.com/**

There's a list of hotlines and service organizations (both national and organized by state) and information about safe sex/prevention, how to choose a doctor, and how to enroll in an AIDS clinical trial (call 800 874 2572). Legal and financial issues, alternative medicine, and treatment developments are also addressed. All of the info is gathered from other resources.

## U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

**AIDS Database Access (National Library of Medicine)**
**telnet://login@medlars.nlm.nih.gov/**

To get access to the free AIDS database portions of the MEDLARS (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System) system of databases and databanks from the National Library of Medicine, you need to fill out a form (available at **gopher://gopher.nlm.nih.gov/00/nlminfo/agreements/TEMPgrp1/aidsapp.txt**) and send it in to: MEDLARS Management Section, National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894, or fax it to 301 496 0822.

**CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse**
**http://cdcnac.aspensys.com:86/**
**gopher://cdcnac.aspensys.com:72/**
**ftp://cdcnac.aspensys.com/pub/cdcnac**

The CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse, with its series of important databases, is a great place to find information about trends in the HIV epidemic, as well as the latest scientific findings. For example, you'll find the AIDS Clinical Trials Information Service and the CDC AIDS Daily Summary. Other services accessible from this site include the CDC National AIDS Hotline and the HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service. You can also access the *CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* from here.

**FDA BBS on AIDS**
**http://www.fda.gov/bbs/AIDS.html**

Here's a collection of AIDS-related press releases, policy statements, articles, speeches, and meetings. Unfortunately, it's all a bit outdated, and it was somewhat shocking to see that only seven policy statements were in the policy area. Still, this is a good place to retrace some of the major developments in AIDS/HIV drug research and U.S. government policy.

**FDA Info on AIDS**
**http://www.fda.gov/cgi-bin/ice-form.pl?KEYWORDS=AIDS+or+HIV&DAYS=&CONTEXT=Search+in+all+documents**

I did a search on the Food and Drug Administration's Web site (**http://www.fda.gov/fdahomepage.html**) for HIV or AIDS and found a long list of articles. One of the best was "Living With AIDS: New Treatments Give Hope," by Rebecca D. Williams (**http://www.fda.gov//bbs/topics/CONSUMER/CON00119.html**). It reviews gains in scientific knowledge made in the last 10 years, important new drugs that have been developed or are on the horizon (the good news is that the FDA has about 400 drugs undergoing testing in its investigational new drug program), and information about vaccine research. This is also a place to learn about the FDA process for getting new drugs to market (check out the article at **http://www.fda.gov//bbs/topics/CONSUMER/CON00257.html**). There's also a very important article about women and AIDS (**http://www.fda.gov//opacom/catalog/womaids.html**).

**National Commission on AIDS Reports**
**gopher://gopher.niaid.nih.gov:70/11/aids/nca**

Here you'll find articles that include "AIDS in Rural America," "America: Living with AIDS," "Challenge of AIDS in Communities of Color," "Failure of U.S. Health Care System," and "Preventing HIV Transmission in Health Care Settings."

**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases AIDS-Related Information**
**gopher://gopher.niaid.nih.gov:70/11/aids**

This will also put you in touch with the CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse, as well as the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (**http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/mmwr.html**), which contains information based on weekly reports to the CDC by state health departments. But you'll also find the NIAID AIDS Agenda Newsletter, the National Commission on AIDS, the VA Aids Information Newsletter, the U.S. Community AIDS Resources, the International AIDS Resources, the National Library of Medicine AIDS Information, and more. To subscribe to the MMWR, send an e-mail to **lists@list.cdc.gov**. The text in the body of the message should read: subscribe mmwr-toc.

## ENROLLING IN CLINICAL TRIALS

**AIDS Treatment Data Network**
**http://health.nyam.org:8000/public_html/network/index.html**

Set up by a non-profit, community-based organization, this site has a list of clinical trials under way in the New York area, as well as at the National Institutes of Health. This is also a good source of information about the latest drug and alternative treatments.

**Canadian HIV Trials Network**
**http://unixg.ubc.ca:780/~fortin/Marcel.html**

Created and funded by the Canadian government, the Canadian HIV Trials Network has news about clinical drug trials in Canada, plus lots of links to other HIV/AIDS organizations.

**Critical Path AIDS Project**
**http://www.critpath.org/critpath.htm**

This includes the full texts of the open protocols of the major clinical trials networks, as well as guides to entering and evaluating clinical trials. There's also info about expanded access programs, buyers' clubs, and patient assistance programs. Check out the good Alternative Treatments area, which has lots of links and an alternative medicine regimen.

**Online Directory of HIV/AIDS Clinical Trials**
**http://altitude.ckm.ucsf.edu/aids/**

The directory allows you to browse through a list of all trials, read full descriptions for each one, and search by condition, drug being tested, T-cell count requirements, or other keywords. Still under construction when I checked was a promising feature: A trials search report. You'll be able to plug in information about conditions you currently have or

have had in the past, put in your medication history and your laboratory test results ($T_4$ helper cells, viral load), then submit the query.

The result — a personalized search for an appropriate trial for you.

**The Information Exchange**
**http://www.bluenet.co.uk/blue/star/ixhome.htm**

This United Kingdom site has an A-Z list of clinical trials, plus an AIDS treatment update that's helpful.

**Vanderbilt University Open Clinical Trials**
**http://www.mc.vanderbil.edu/adl/aids_project/actu/partcip.html**

Find out about HIV trials being recruited at Vanderbilt.

## TREATMENT NEWS

**ACTUP Treatment Digest**
**http://www.tcp.com:8000/qrd/www/AIDS.BBS/periodicals_pwactup.html**

Published by the chapter in New York, this archive is somewhat out of date (it goes up to 1993).

**AIDS Treatment News**
**http://www.tcp.com:8000/qrd/www/AIDS.BBS/periodicals_atn.html**
**gopher://gopher.hivnet.org:70/11s/magazines/atn**

Huge resource list of articles about alternative and experimental AIDS treatments. Full text-search capabilities in the Gopher version.

**ChronicIllNet**
**http://www.calypte.com/AIDS/index.html**

Focuses on current breakthroughs in understanding immune system imbalance syndromes. There's a research postings page, an index of articles, and more.

**Gay Men's Health Crisis Treatment Issues**
**http://www.noah.cuny.edu/aids/gmhc/gmhc.html**

Here you'll find a monthly newsletter dealing with experimental AIDS therapies.

**HIV InfoWeb**
**http://www.jri.org/infoweb/**

Especially good is the Treatment Information Library, which has a number of newsletters, like Bulletin of Experimental Treatment for AIDS (published by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation), the HIV Herald (of Australia), and AIDS Treatment News. There's also a directory of clinical trials in eastern Massachusetts, and an online Pharmaceutical Resources Directory.

**HIVNet List of Publications**
**http://gopher.hivnet.org:70/1/magazines**

Link to a variety of HIV/AIDS-related magazines, including ACTUP Paris Newsletter ACTION, AIDS Info (The Netherlands), AIDS Treatment News, EuroCaso Newsletter, and HIV Herald.

**Keep Hope Alive**
**http://www.execpc.com/~keephope/keephope.html**

A source of information on nutritional, bio-oxidative and alternative therapies for people whose immune systems are compromised.

**Positively HIV**
**http://www.paonline.com/phiv/home.htm**

This site has loads of information about alternative therapies, nutrition, and direct services. Check out the HIVnALIVE Nutritional Project.

## LEGAL/COUNSELING RESOURCES

**AIDS Legal Referral Panel**
**http://www.lyb.com/high-brow/alrp-hp.html**

This group has helped more than 20,000 people with legal matters related to AIDS and HIV.

**AIDS/HIV Nightline**
**http://challenge.tiac.net/users/longleyr/aids/**

Find out about an AIDS/HIV nightline to help people who've tested HIV+.

**KAIROS Support for Caregivers**
**http://cyberpark.com:80/kairos/backgrnd.htm**

This non-profit resource center has reference materials addressing such issues as burnout by caregivers.

## GEOGRAPHIC/REGIONAL INFORMATION

**AIDS and HIV Information and Resources**
**http://www.ircam.fr/solidarites/sida/index-e.html**

This compilation of AIDS/HIV resources in France and on the Internet lets you get information in both French and English.

**AIDS Foundation, Muenster, Germany**
**http://www.uni-muenster.de/MAG3/AHMS/**

AIDS resources in Germany (site's in German).

**AIDS In Mexico**
**http://jeff.dca.udg.mx/sida/sida.html**

A great list of resources in Mexico, as well as the world. Plus events, conferences, and other news; there's a mirror site in English.

**AIDS Project Los Angeles**
**http://www.gus.com/care/apla/apla.html**

Here's where to find out about the spectrum of services available from AIDS Project LA, which has been working with and advocating for people with AIDS since 1982.

**AIDS Resources Center**
**http://www.actwin.com/queerindex.html**

Find a list of AIDS resources in Boston, MA, plus more.

**Colorado AIDS Projects**
**http://www.tde.com/users/cap/**

Still under construction when I visited, this site already included a list of client services and an Education Department.

**Detroit Community AIDS Library**
**http://www.libraries.wayne.edu/dcal/aids.html**

Provides information about AIDS resources in the Detroit and Southeastern Michigan areas, including hotlines, and a phone number for experimental drug treatment (800 874 2572).

**Estadisticas sobre SIDA**
**http://cenids.ssa.gob.mx/sida.html**

This information is focused on statistical information about AIDS in Mexico, with information about occurrence by geographic region, age, and sex group.

**HIV Electronic Media Information Review**
**http://florey.biosci.uq.oz.au/hiv/AIDS-OZ.htm**

Here you'll find a listing of resources in Australia. There's also good information about AIDS/HIV in New Zealand, Hawaii, and Thailand.

**Napa Valley AIDS Project**
**http://www.vive.com/connect/nvap/**

Though still under construction when I checked, this site was about to launch an online AIDS directory, and already had a calendar of events for Napa Valley, CA.

**Rural Prevention Center**
**http://www.indiana.edu:80/~aids/**

A joint project of Indiana University and Purdue University, this site is specifically designed to help prevent HIV and sexually transmitted diseases in rural parts of the U.S.

**San Francisco Public Library — Directory of Bay Area HIV/AIDS Agencies**
**http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/drabin/niso_forms.pp**

Select "John Maguire HIV/AIDS Information File" under "Databases to search," then enter search phrases to start a search.

When I chose "risk," I got 50 entries that put me in touch with a variety of prevention and risk assessment agencies in San Francisco.

**The Biology of AIDS: Compiled Resources**
**http://www.bocklabs.wisc.edu/duni/aidsresources.html**

Compiled by folks over at the University of South Florida, this page lists AIDS/HIV resources within the state of Florida.

There's also listings of national organizations and hotlines, and worldwide organizations.

**The HIV/AIDS Information Outreach Project**
**http://www.nyam.org/aids/aids1.html**

This has links to good resources; a virtual library with guidelines, reports, and newsletters, and HIV/AIDS programs at the New York Academy of Medicine.

**Western Colorado AIDS Care Consortium**
**http://www.iti2.net/hhs/wcacc.htm**

Find a list of resources and organizations in Western Colorado dedicated to helping people with AIDS/HIV.

## SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**AIDS Education Training Project**
**http://www.ach.uams.edu/~bnd/aids/**

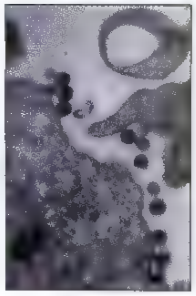
Learn about the neuropsychiatric and psychosocial aspects of patients who are HIV-positive and AIDS-infected.

**AIDS Patents Project**
**http://patents.cnidr.org/**

Gain access to U.S. and Japanese patents — including thumbnail images — relating to AIDS.

You can do free-text and Boolean searches, or browse through the (very large) database.

**AIDS Pathology**
**http://www-medlib.med.utah.edu/WebPath/AIDS.html**



Created by folks at the University of Utah, this site includes a textbook of AIDS pathology, as well as information about how HIV infects a cell, the genome of HIV, pneumocystis carinii and cystomegalovirus, and other diseases associated with it. You can see JPEGS of the pathologies.

**Biology of AIDS**
**http://www.bocklabs.wisc.edu/duni/aidssyllabus.html**

A course syllabus from the University of South Florida, with reading materials and a timeline of homework assignments.

**HIV Sequence Database**
**http://hiv-web.lanl.gov/**

Hailing from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, this site "collects, curates, analyzes, and publishes" genetic sequences of HIV and related species. There's a search engine.

**Medscape**
**http://www.medscape.com/**

Created by a company that publishes *The AIDS Reader* — which is written for clinicians and offers information on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of HIV — this site had more than 225 articles on AIDS when I checked.

**N.Y. Times Health News Daily on AIDS**
**http://nytsyn.com/med/Aids/**

Lots of scientific news articles archived here.

**The TB/HIV Research Laboratory**
**http://www.brown.edu/Research/TB-HIV_Lab/**

Housed at Brown University in Providence, RI, this lab is conducting research into the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and HIV. Beware the slow server. ■

# BUY THE RIGHT CAR ONLINE

**We've gathered up the resources to prevent you from spinning your wheels or having to deal with the sales sharks in the show room.**

by Todd Marshall

Pssst. Hey, c'mere. Wanna buy a car? We've got some great deals for you. Just as software, clothes, and other assorted trinkets are now for sale on the Web, new and used cars are being offered at bargain prices at tons of sites. Some models are even being sold at cost. Want to learn everything there is to know about Cadillacs, without dealing with an overbearing salesman? You'll find it here. The Web is also an excellent place to locate antique and rare automobiles.

The one thing to be aware of as you're shopping is the ever-choppy world of online commerce. Use the same sense you would if you were buying something from a classified, especially when you're dealing with a company or person you've never heard of. In other words, don't give out your credit card number to "Joe-Bob's RV Heaven" for a down payment, no matter how solid or respectable the Web page looks. It could be a scam.

Also, even if it is a reputable source, you may want to opt to read your credit card information over the phone, since the Internet's security issues still aren't completely resolved. It's still possible for someone to illegally intercept your credit card number. Don't let anyone pressure you into a deal. If you haven't seen the vehicle, don't agree to buy it. The picture you're seeing of the automobile could be from five years ago, before it slid out of control and into a Dunkin' Donuts. And finally, remember — when you buy used, you're usually buying as is.

Although you can't do the proverbial kick of the tires, you can get great deals and plenty of information, and even find the best place to buy a particular car in your area. If you're thinking of pitching the old jalopy, check out these sites to make an informed buying decision, before you take a chance on a used car, or deal with the sales sharks in the show room.

## BEST OF THE BUNCH

### AutoSite
**http://www.autosite.com/**

This is the biggest and baddest of them all, and definitely the site to start with. It offers an incredible amount of information. Included is a search engine that lets you pick the perfect car from a massive list of variables, including price, manufacturer, body type, stereo, and added extras. Once you've discovered the car that matches your criteria, you'll find a picture of the car, plus plenty of information about it and the manufacturer.

Almost any car-related information you can think of is there. Tips on financing, simple car repairs, regional driving schools, automotive magazines, clubs, links to manufacturers' Web sites, insurance information — the list goes on forever. It's also one of the few sites you'll find that deals with both new and used cars. While information like a used car's "blue book" value requires membership to the site (which costs $4.95 for three months), it's well worth it. If there's only one car-buying site you're going to visit, this should be it.

### AutoScape
**http://www.autoscape.com**

Its servers run a little slower than Autosite's, but there's plenty of information on AutoScape as well. You can get dealer specifications on almost all new car models, discover a dealer near you, use a search engine to find used cars, and more.

Also, although AutoScape doesn't have as much to offer as AutoSite, it's free. When I visited, a lot of it was under construction (and we all know what that can mean), but if the site lives up to its promise, it should make a great resource.

**Though AutoScape doesn't have as much info as AutoSite, it's free, which is always appreciated.**

**AutoSite is the cream of the crop if you're looking for a car, though access to some of the information requires joining (at a cost of $4.95 for three months).**

## NEW CARS

### Automobile Manufacturers
**http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Companies/Automotive/Manufacturers/**

### New Car Dealers
**http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Companies/Automotive/Dealers/**

Going straight to the source is a good idea, although most car companies haven't (yet) made it possible for you to buy directly from them online. So, if you're planning on buying a new car, check out Yahoo's listing of manufacturers and resellers.

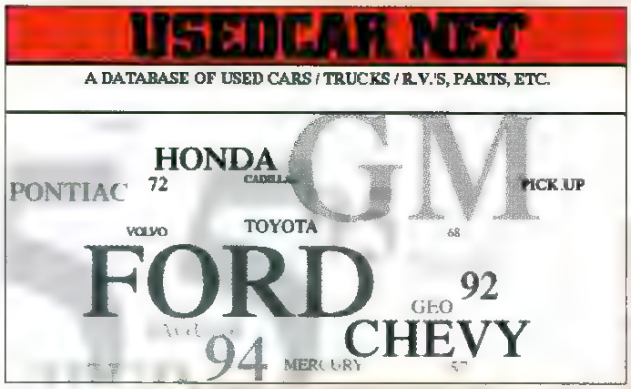
## USED CARS

### AutoSeller
**http://www.autoseller.com/**

AutoSeller takes a big bite, attempting to be a global classifieds directory for used cars, but as you may guess, some of the entries are pretty sparse. If you're looking to buy a car in Bali, forget it. But, unlike many other classifieds, they're absolutely free.

**The good news? AutoSeller's classifieds are free. The bad? Some of the entries here are pretty sparse.**

### UsedCar Net
**http://www.usedcars.com/**




**Want to find out about parts information, used car auctions, and dealers around the U.S. offering used cars? UsedCar Net is the place to go.**

Stepping away from the classifieds motif, UsedCar Net offers an impressive list of resources, including a search engine on specific used cars, and dealers around the country that offer them. There's also information on parts, auctions, and events around the country.

### Wheels and Deals
**http://www.wheelsnet.com/**

With a nice, simple way to search for used cars in your area and a reasonable rate to advertise ($3 for four weeks), this should be an ideal used car page. Unfortunately, chunks of the country aren't represented and those that are have sparse offerings.

**More regions need to be added to this site if it's to be an effective used car resource.**

### Swap Meet
**http://www.mm.com/ swapmeet/**

Given the illustrious "Top 5%" award from Point Communications (**http://www.pointcom.com/**), this site leans toward the antique/collector realm, although there's a healthy list of affordable models as well. Hard-to-find parts and various auto shows are also included.

### Wheels On-Line
**http://www.snsnet.net/wol/**

**Antique or collector cars can be found at the Swap Meet site.**

If you happen to live in the Alabama area, this is the site for you.

It offers hundreds of used cars, with a simple interface to find the model and price you're interested in. The site is also updated quite often.

### Used Car Classifieds
**http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Classifieds/Automotive/**

There are plenty of other Web sites that have used car classifieds, some of which are regional and some national.

The Yahoo list is pretty comprehensive, but you'll also want to see if any newspapers have put their classifieds on the Web.

## REPAIR

### Autoshop Online
**http://www.autoshop-online.com/**

From old-school mechanics to ratchet newbies, this site is a comprehensive guide to fixing all things automotive. While basic tips are free, questions answered from the experts will cost you $20. Nonetheless, this is a great site.

**Get answers to basic questions for free, but more advanced ones cost $.**

### AutoHelp
**http://www.thesphere.com/AutoHelp/**

This is yet another "we'll find the used car or parts for you" page, but the AskRandy section is helpful for specific repair questions. Since the site doesn't get much traffic, chances are your questions will be answered (and it's free).

## AUTO PARTS

### Coast to Coast Parts Locator
**http://www.holli.com/ccfax/**

These guys claim an 82 percent success rate for finding any part you want. From what I could discern, their service is free. Charges go to manufacturers and resellers that use the service. However, look out for hidden costs.

### Goodyear Tire Company
**http://www.goodyear.com/**

Once you can finally get on the site, there's loads of good information, including the correct tires for your car, proper care, when it's time to get some new ones, and more.

**Confused about which tires are right for your car? Visit this site.**

## COLLECTORS

### CyberWeb Auto
**http://www.gulf.net/emall/cyberwebauto/**

For car enthusiasts, this is the place to be: plenty of pictures of custom and rare cars, auto show information, as well as a (sparse) classifieds section.

### Kong Kars
**http://www.seanet.com/Vendors/kongkars/kongkars.html**

Old-car-o-rama! While most of the cars shown are for sale, there's plenty of full-color

**Kong Kars, specializing in vintage models, has lots of great photos.**

photos to check out, as well as some pretty good deals on some vintage models. Be sure to visit the Car of the Month area.

## SELLING CARS

### How To Sell New and Used Cars
**http://Intergal.com/dm_mgt_grp/**

Want to be on the other end for a change? Here's a get-rich-quick scheme — buy cars for pennies and sell them for thousands of dollars. Of course, to find out how to do this, you have to buy the book this Web page is selling.

## ORGANIZATIONS

### The National Motorists Association
**http://www.msn.fullfeed.com/nma/**

A multi-faceted interest group, the NMA is the only place where you can get information on the current appeal of the 55 m.p.h. law *and* a T-shirt supporting it.

## PURCHASING TIPS

### Edmund's Automobile Buyer's Guide
**http://enews.com/magazines/edmunds/**

Definitely go to this page before you buy a car. There's tons of information to be found, and it's all free. The page links to a gopher site that has the "blue book" on several models, as well as plenty of articles and testimonials on how not to get suckered into a lemon.

### Professional Auto Buyers Network
**http://www.icw.com/auto/auto.html**

Although it's nothing more than a glorified advertisement, this consulting company's page has a few purchasing terms clarified, and a nice, automated way to send for more information. They don't come right out and tell you their consulting fee, though.

### Consumer Automotive Research Services (CARS)
**http://cyberactive-1.com/cars/**

Same deal with this page. Plenty of horn-blowing, and little information except for an 800-number for more information. They claim they can get you the best deal on buying new, however.

## CAR MAGAZINES

### Car and Driver
**http://www.caranddriver.com/**

One of the world's best automotive magazines has done a great job putting itself on the Web. It offers several feature stories, a buyer's guide, favorite automotive links, and a lot more.

### Popular Mechanics
**http://popularmechanics.com/popmech/auto/1HOMEAUTO.html**

With plenty of pictures, QuickTime movies, and interactive buying advice, Popular Mechanics has also made an impressive debut on the Web. Make sure to check out the Time Machine.

### AutoWeek Online
**http://www.autoweek.com/**

Geared to the serious enthusiast, AutoWeek has classifieds, online surveys, screen savers, and a very eclectic list of automotive links.

## INSURANCE

### American Insurance Agency
**http://challenge.tiac.net/users/amerins/**

One of many insurance agencies on the net, American Insurance lets you fill out an online form that yields a free price estimate for you car's insurance. It also offers life, home, and other types of insurance.

### Insurance Express
**http://www.insrexpress.com/form-ca.html**

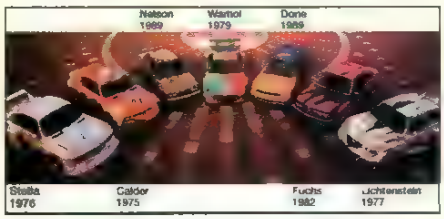
Same deal with Insurance Express, except if you choose to go with this insurance company, all of your transactions can happen over the Internet. Is that good or bad?

## ART

### Car Art
**http://www2.nse.com/artcars/newimages/weekend.html**

Did you ever see a perfectly good car completely covered with paintings and pictures and think, "What the hell?" This page will explain it to you.

### BMW Museum
**http://www.bmw.ca/resource/museum/artcars.html**




The server is slow-going and there's not much to see, but if you're a diehard BMW fan, it's worth a look.

## LEASING

### Automobile Leasing: The Art of the Deal
**http://www.mindspring.com/~ahearn/lease/lease.html**

Here's an interesting concept. Rather than actually buying a car, just lease one. That way, you'll get a new car every couple of years. This comprehensive insider's guide will explain the ins and outs. Nice page.

**There are advantages and disadvantages to leasing a car, but you'll definitely be able to get a new car every few years this way. Learn the ins and outs of how to lease at this site.**

how to

# BEGINNER'S PAGE
# OPTIMIZE YOUR LIFE!

**Here's how to make your hard drive happy, so that your forays onto the Internet are as smooth and easy as possible.**

by Kathy Tafel

Usually, we've devoted the Beginner's Page to explaining how to use your Internet software more effectively. This month, I'm going to give you a lecture about taking care of your computer so that your Internet experience is less annoying and, ultimately, more gratifying.

There are certain things you can do for your computer to make it work better. One is to check your hard drive. Your hard drive is one of the parts of a computer that does the most physical work. It stores data on a platter, and spins the platter to spit the data back at you when you open an application or file.

Your hard drive is much happier when every bit of data in the file or application is in one place. It only has to spin the platter to one point and then can spew data. However, you usually don't record files and applications in a continuous stream. Instead, over the course of any day, you're likely to check your e-mail several different times, create a few word processing documents, erase a picture of something you downloaded last week, and check your e-mail again. By the time the day's over, you've fragmented your drive.

Eudora uses one file to store mail, and America Online stores art in another file. These files are especially susceptible to fragmentation. As you add to these files, you'll find it takes longer and longer to open the applications, because the hard drive has to spin and then spew data, spin and then spew data, spin and then spew data many times.

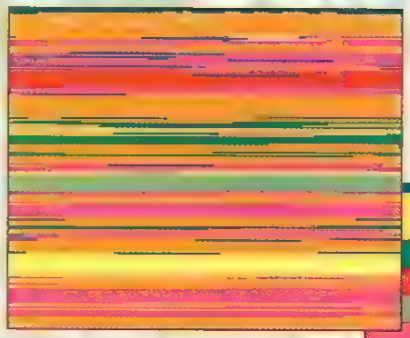
You can sometimes even hear how hard your drive is working when you open these files. (I personally think it's trying to give you a guilt trip.) The solution? Optimize your drive.

An optimizing program (we used Norton Utilities' Speed Disk) takes the files that are scattered across your drive and puts them back in order.

## MAKING YOUR HARD DRIVE WORK OPTIMALLY:

**1.** Boot your computer from a drive other than the one that needs optimizing. If you have more than one hard drive, use a system on that drive to boot. Otherwise, you can use a floppy disk (usually the utility program will have a disk you can use for this).

You need to do this because the program moves files around on your hard drive. If that drive is operating your computer, files are open, and the optimizing software can't move open files.



The drive shown here has moderate fragmentation.

**2.** Check for fragmentation. Usually this is just a matter of pressing a button that says "check drive." If you're told that you have only a little or no fragmentation, you probably don't need to optimize your drive. If you have a lot of fragmentation, then you should definitely optimize your drive. If you have moderate fragmentation, optimize your hard drive if you really need a coffee break.

**3.** Defragment the drive. There should be a button or menu command that says "optimize."

**4.** Once you start the optimizing process, go take a long break. Depending on how big and fast your hard drive is, optimizing it can take 45 minutes or more.

**5.** Still there? Hey, I said this would take a while. Go look at the Bizarre Site o' the Month (page 95) while you're waiting.

**6.** O.K., it's done. The optimizing program has made a pretty picture representing the data on your drive. All the files are in order, and opening big files will be much quicker.

**7.** Remember to do this again in a month (or sooner if you download lots of audio and video files). ■

After optimization, this drive has no fragmentation. You can see by the color the kinds of files on the drive (system, application, data).

# WHAT'S COOL!

# 1-800-786-5513

Removable Cartridge Drive

SyQuest

Best buy in removable media! Features 13.5ms, 128K buffer, hard disk technology, & metal construction.

| Each includes 1 free disk | 135MB | 270MB |
|---|---|---|
| Internal IDE | $189 | $349 |
| External SCSI | $229 | $429 |
| External for parallel port | $Call | $489 |

230MB Optical Drive

FUJITSU

Best selling optical drive made. 230MB, 30ms, 256K buffer. Reads & writes 128 & 230MB disks.

| | |
|---|---|
| External for printer port (1 free disk) | $439 |
| External for PC (includes controller, 1 disk) | $479 |
| External for MAC (1 free disk) | $479 |

Best Buy Hard Drives

FUJITSU

| IDE | Spindle Speed | Warranty | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1080MB | 5400rpm | 3yr | $209 |
| SCSI | | | |
| 1080MB | 5400rpm | 3yr | $263 |
| 2176MB | 7200rpm | 5yr | $615 |
| 4350MB | 7200rpm | 5yr | $925 |

CD ROM Recorder

This complete package includes everything you need: Adaptec controller, cables, 1 disk, and Incat Easy-CD Pro full featured software that supports Windows & Macintosh.

**Internal $899 External $999**

CD ROM Recorder

PINNACLE MICRO

The most trusted name in CD recorders. Each kit includes everything you need including 2 free disks. PC kits includes controller. Model RCD5020

| | |
|---|---|
| Complete PC Internal | $949 |
| Complete External for PC or MAC | $1199 |
| CDR-74 media Qty 10/25/50 | $7.69/$6.79/$6.59 |

Removable Drive Bracket

Converts any 3 1/2" hard drive into a removable drive. Great for transportability, data interchange, or security needs. Extremely high quality construction. Metal cartridge and frame, cooling fan, SCSI unit has ID select on the cartridge. Qty discounts available.

IDE $79 SCSI $85 WIDE SCSI $129

## IDE HARD DRIVES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 639MB | 10MS | 4500RPM | Western Digital | $175 |
| 850MB | 14MS | 4500RPM | Quantum | $195 |
| 850MB | 11MS | 5400RPM | Seagate | $195 |
| 853MB | 10MS | 4500RPM | Western Digital | $192 |
| 1050MB | 12MS | 5400RPM | Quantum | $224 |
| 1080MB | 9.5MS | 5400RPM | Fujitsu | $209 |
| 1080MB | 11MS | 5400RPM | Seagate | $240 |
| 1280MB | 10MS | 4500RPM | Western Digital | $275 |
| 1620MB | 11MS | 4500RPM | NEC | $349 |
| 1624MB | 10MS | 5200RPM | Western Digital | $359 |

**POPULAR IDE CONTROLLERS** (Save $10 with drive)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ISA | 16Bit | GSI-18 | $55 |
| ISA | 16Bit | GSI-21 | $64 |
| PCI | 32Bit | Tekram DC290S | $55 |
| VESA | 32Bit | Tekram DC280E | $60 |
| VESA | 32Bit | Promise EIDE2300+ | $69 |

## TAPE DRIVES

Prices include 1 free tape! Save $10 with hard drive!

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 420MB | Conner | $145 | 800MB | Conner | $171 |
| 800MB | Colorado | $199 | 1.3Gig | Colorado | $269 |
| 1.7Gig | Conner | $229 | 3.2Gig | Conner | $295 |

**SCSI TAPE DRIVES** (bare, no tape)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2Gig | HP | DAT | C1534A | $699 |
| 2Gig | Conner | DAT | C4320RT | $789 |
| 2-4Gig | Conner | QIC | TSM4000 | $399 |
| 2.3-4.6Gig | Tandberg | QIC | TDC3700 | $389 |
| 4-8Gig | Conner | DAT | C4324RP | $849 |
| 4-8Gig | HP | DAT | C1536A | $799 |
| 4-16Gig | Conner | DAT | C4326NP | $929 |
| 4-16Gig | HP | DAT | C1533A | $1029 |
| 3.5-7Gig | Exabyte | DAT | 8205XL | $1259 |

## SCSI HARD DRIVES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 540MB | 9.5MS | 5400RPM | Fujitsu | $180 |
| 850MB | 14MS | 4500RPM | Quantum | $209 |
| 1050MB | 12MS | 5400RPM | Quantum | $269 |
| 1080MB | 9.5MS | 5400RPM | Fujitsu | $263 |
| 1083MB | 11MS | 4090RPM | NEC | $259 |
| 1620MB | 11MS | 4500RPM | NEC | $379 |
| 2050MB | 8.5MS | 7200RPM | Micropolis | $665 |
| 2147MB | 8.5MS | 5400RPM | Conner | $669 |
| 2147MB | 9MS | 5411RPM | Seagate | $680 |
| 2147MB | 8MS | 7200RPM | Seagate | $830 |
| 2150MB | 8MS | 7200RPM | Quantum | $735 |
| 2176MB | 9.5MS | 7200RPM | Fujitsu | $615 |
| 2216MB | 8.5MS | 5400RPM | Quantum | $635 |
| 4290MB | 9MS | 5400RPM | Seagate | $969 |
| 4294MB | 8.9MS | 7200RPM | Micropolis | $979 |
| 4290MB | 8MS | 7200RPM | Seagate | $1189 |
| 4300MB | 8.6MS | 7200RPM | Quantum | $979 |
| 4350MB | 9.5MS | 7200RPM | Fujitsu | $925 |
| 9080MB | 11MS | 5400RPM | Seagate | $2099 |
| 9091MB | 12MS | 5400RPM | Micropolis | $1999 |

**POPULAR SCSI CONTROLLERS** (Save $10 with drive)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ISA | 16Bit | Future Domain 1610 | $89 |
| ISA | 16Bit | Adaptec 1522Kit | $119 |
| ISA | 16Bit | Tekram DC300B | $159 |
| ISA | 16Bit | Adaptec 1542CKit | $259 |
| VESA | 32Bit | Adaptec 2842Kit | $249 |
| PCI | 32Bit | Adaptec 2940Kit | $259 |

**WE STOCK WIDE SCSI DRIVES AND CONTROLLERS**

*Check out our home page*

- *Daily specials*
- *Closeout items*
- *More services on the way.*
- *Current prices*
- *Specifications*

http://www.megahaus.com

## CD ROM DRIVES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IDE (ATAPI)** | | | | |
| Toshiba | 4X | 190ms | XM5302B | $149 |
| Teac | 6X | 110ms | CD56E | $239 |
| New! | 8X | | | $359 |
| **SCSI** | | | | |
| Sanyo | 4X | 190ms | SH254S | $155 |
| NEC | 4X | 220ms | CDR4X | $205 |
| Pioneer | 4.4X | 140ms | DRU124X | $225 |
| NEC | 6X | 150ms | CDR512 | $315 |
| Toshiba | 6.7X | 120ms | XM3601 | $309 |
| Plextor | 6X | 145ms | PX63CS | $429 |
| **CD ROM CHANGERS** | | | | |
| Pioneer | 4.4X | 6 Disk | 190ms | $485 |
| **CD ROM RECORDERS** | | | | |
| Hewlett Packard | 2X Internal with controller | | | $989 |

**Recordable CD ROM Media Sale**

CDR-74 With Jewel Case

| 10 | 25 | 50 | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $7.68 | $6.78 | $6.58 | $6.28 | $5.59 | $5.49 |

MEGA HAUS

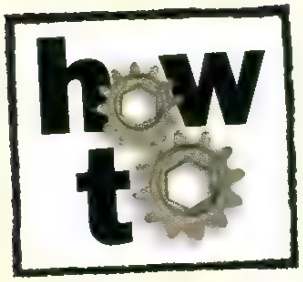
HARD DRIVES

- Specializing in drives since 1987.
- Same day shipping on most orders.
- 30 Day return policy.

DISCOVER MasterCard VISA

2201 Pine Drive
Dickinson, Texas 77539
(713)534-3919 FAX (713)534-6580

Prices & specifications subject to change without notice. Returns subject to restocking fee.




# NETFAQ

by Todd Marshall

**Got a question about getting or staying online? We've got answers. Send them to us via e-mail to faq@thenet-usa.com, or by snail mail to FAQ c/o *The Net* 1350 Old Bayshore Highway, Suite 210, Burlingame, CA 94010.**

**Q How and where do you "chat" with someone? I am able to get on the net at my college, so I have access, but I'm totally lost. Please help me!**

A Just as you need a browser to read HTML documents on the Web, you usually need a chat client to access chat rooms. Now-adays, many chat rooms are available through the World Wide Web, but implementing chat capabilities through a Web page isn't easy from a creator's stand-point, so it hasn't really caught on. To have access to the really cool conversations, you'll need a dedicated chat client. Many chat clients you'll run across will be bug-ridden pieces of schlock, but if you hunt hard enough, you'll find a good one. There are hundreds of chat clients available on the net, most of which you can get for free. Netscape's new chat client is a good choice. Whatever software you choose to use, make sure that it's compliant with IRC (Internet Relay Chat), the standard for chat technology. A good place to start is **http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu:80/text/faq/usenet/irc-faq/faq.html**. This site has links to chat clients for all popular computer platforms.

Once you have the software, just enter the IRC address, and that's it. The bigger problem is finding a chat area that's worth anything. The only suggestion I can make here is to surf, surf, surf. Chat addresses constantly change, and the more you search, the cooler will be the discussions that you'll run across. A good place to find some of the more standard chat areas (also called channels) is **http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/Chatting/IRC/**. Beyond that, just ask around, and you'll soon have your own favorite haunts.

You know the drill about chat netiquette by now, so we'll save it. Just remember that, as with newsgroups, it's a good idea to be a lurker on a channel for a while before you begin speaking up. Get the feel of the conversation prior to just busting in, and before you know it, you'll be heavy in the debate. If you want to skip finding a chat client, check out this site full of links to chat areas on the Web: **http://www.ichat.com/chatdir/webchat.html**.

**Q I keep hearing about Telnet, but don't know what it is, or when/how to use it.**

A Before the Web became so popular, Telnet was one of the best ways to access information. These days, people use it mostly to remotely access their e-mail so they don't have to pay for a long-distance call. In addition, there are some forms of information on the Internet that are set up on Unix servers in a text menu-based system; you can only get to them via Telnet. Many educational and government information resources, for example, are still set up in this fashion, so it's well-worth knowing how to Telnet. However, keepers of servers with information they want people to see usually have translated the data to HTML and put it on the Web. Also, if you're chatting on the Internet, depending on the chat client you use and the way the IRC is set up (see previous question), you may have to Telnet to the server that's holding the chat session.

Telnet is a standard Internet protocol that lets you connect directly from your Internet server to another, whether it's across the street or in Indonesia. Although it's much more invisible on the Web, when you click on any hyperlink or go to any Web page, you're technically Telnetting, since you're connecting from your server to another on the Internet.

To Telnet, all you need is a Telnet client and an Internet account. For the PC, there are hundreds of Telnet clients — one is even built into Windows 95 (go to "Command" in the "Start" Menu, and type "Telnet"). For the Mac, your best choice is NCSA Telnet. You can find Telnet applications all over the net; just search through your favorite index page. Although each Telnet application works differently, all do the same thing.

For a majority of Telnet clients, all you have to do is enter "somewhere.domain." For instance, if your e-mail address is **person@rocket.com**, and you want to connect to the server, you'd just enter: "**rocket.com**." A variety of things can happen at this point, depending on how the server you're connecting to is set up. A text menu usually pops up, and asks for your user name and password. Once you're connected, you're connected. You can then do whatever — FTP, chat, retrieve your mail, etc.

If you have an account with a commercial online service, there's really no need to use Telnet, since the bigger services have local access lines all over the country and the world. But, if your e-mail is through a local Internet provider in your state and you're vacationing in another state, getting your e-mail could prove expensive unless you Telnet. In that case, you simply need a shell program (CompuServe is a very popular one nowadays, since it acts as a direct Internet provider). For Macs, Config PPP will suffice. For Windows, there's WinSock — whatever.

Once you've made the modem connection and you're up on the net, Telnet to your Internet provider's server, enter your user name and password, and get your mail.

For a good starting resource on Telnet and some of the existing servers you can access, including the card catalogs of various libraries, and free Internet community networks, check out the excellent beginners guide, Zen and the Art of the Internet at **http://www.cs.indiana.edu/docproject/zen/zen-1.0_toc.html**. ■

# the blue pages

## internet directory

**Hey, lookee here, The Blue Pages wants to help you get in touch with your community resources. It may not be as fun as music or UFOs, but it's practical. And to add a little excitement to the experience, I've tossed in some investment sites, games, e-zines, and beer stuff. I've been told that the Web will wipe out TV in the future. Something tells me this just ain't gonna happen, so Wayne has added some TV station sites in case you want to see what these broadcasting folks are up to. Have a great February, beware of cupids with poison arrows, and happy surfing.**

*— Blue Grrrl*

MAIL LISTS

### Midwest

**BIKEMIDWEST**
Bicycling discussion for enthusiasts in OH, KY, TN, IN, MI, IL, WI, MI, MO, and IA.
Mail To:majordomo @fuji.physics.indiana.edu
Type: SUBSCRIBE BIKEMIDWEST

**CLEVELAND SPORTS**
Provides a forum for people to discuss their favorite Cleveland sports teams/personalities.
Mail To: sports-request@wariat.org
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**OHIO-STATE**
This mailing list is for friends of Ohio State University.
Mail To: Majordomo@world.std.com
Type: Subscribe ohio-state

**MW-RAVES**
MW-Raves covers the Midwestern U.S., including NE, IA, MI, WI, IL, MI, IN, OH, KY, MO, and KA.
Mail To: majordomo@taz.hyperreal.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

### South

**APPALACHIAN TRAIL**
Includes general use guidelines for the Appalachian Trail, trail maintenance, tips for AT hikers.
Mail To: listproc@inc.net
Type: Subscribe at-l <your name>

**DALLAS COWBOYS**
Discussion of the Dallas Cowboys. YeeeeHaw!
Mail To: cowboys-request@emmitt.dseg.ti.com
Type: Subscribe
COWBOYS <your name>

**HOGTALK**
Arkansas Razorback sports, except basketball. BBall gets its own newsgroup.
Mail To: listserv@law.uark.edu
Type: subscribe hogtalk <your address>

**NEWORLEANS-WEEKLY**
Any and all aspects of the city of New Orleans; history, politics, culture, food, entertainment...
Mail To: mail-server@mintir.new-orleans.la.us
Type: SUBSCRIBE NEW-ORLEANS

### East

**ALBANY-DEMOCRATS**
A mailing list for Albany, NY enrolled Democrats.
Mail To: albany-democrats-request@webcom.com
Type: Subscribe
albany-democrats <your address>

**BCBV**
Cycling in the Philadelphia greater metropolitan region.
Mail To: bike-request @bcdv.drexel.edu (majordomo)
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**BRONX-SCIENCE**
A place for alumni of the Bronx High School of Science to contact each other.
Mail To: bronx-science-request @infopro.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**DC-BIKE**
Discussion list of bicycling in the Washington, DC metro area.
Mail To: majordomo@igc.apc.org
Type: subscribe dcbike

**DC-SPORTS**
dc-sports is for the discussion of professional, college, and other athletics in Washington, DC.
Mail To: listserv@netcom.com
Type: Subscribe dc-sports<your e-mail-address>

**MARYLIB**
For Maryland area librarians and information professionals.
Mail To: listproc@list.ab.umd.edu
Type: subscribe MARYLIB <your firstname lastname>

**MASSBIKE**
Discussion of bicycling issues in Massachusetts.
Mail To: massbike-request @cfa165.harvard.edu
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**NERAVES (NORTHEAST RAVES)**
NE-Raves covers the Northeastern U.S., including ME, NH, VT, NY, MA, RI, DE, NJ, PA, and WV. Get yer whistles....
Mail To: listserv@umdd.umd.edu
Type: ne-raves name@address <Firstname Lastname>

**NYCKAYAKER**
For paddle boaters in the northeast U.S. area.
Mail To: majordomo@world.std.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**PB-CLE-RAVES (PITTSBURGH/CLEVELAND RAVES)**
Covering the greater Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Akron metropolitan areas.
Mail To:
listserv@telerama.lm.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**PA-LIBERNET**
For big-L and small-l Libertarians near Pennsylvania with an interest in matters of personal and/or political liberty.
Mail To: pa-libernet-request @cellar.org
Type: Subscribe <your name>

### East

**ARIZONA HIKING NEWSLETTER**
Info Arizona hikers and backpackers of happenings in AZ.
Mail To: 102110.265@compuserve.com (Matt Sciascia)
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**BA-LIBERTY**
Announcement of local Bay Area Libertarian meetings.
Mail To:
majordomo@shell.portal.com
Type: subscribe ba-liberty

**LA-MOTSS**
Online social and political forum for gay, lesbian, and bisexual discussions in Los Angeles area.
Mail To:
majordomo@langevin.usc.edu
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**MTNRAVES**
The MtnRaves mailing list is dedicated to UT, CO, AZ, NM, ID, and WY. Techno lives.
Mail To:
majordomo@xmission.com
Type: Help

**NW-RAVES (NORTHWEST RAVES)**
NW-Raves covers the Northwest U.S. and Western Canada.
Mail To: nw-raves-request @wimsey.bc.ca (Pat Lui)
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**SANTA-CRUZ-BIKES**
For Santa Cruz regional discussions. Surf's up!
Mail To: majordomo@cycling.org
Type: subscribe santa-cruz-bikes

**SFRAVES (SAN FRANCISCO RAVES)**
SFRaves is the original rave mailing list. Also available in digest and calendar-only versions. High-volume.
Mail To:
majordomo@hyperreal.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

**UTAH LIBERTY**
It is low in volume and highly provincial in nature.
Mail To: majordomo@xmission.com
Type: Subscribe <your name>

### Canada

**CDNFOLK**
A mailing list dedicated to the discussion of Canadian folk music, with special emphasis on the music of Stan Rogers.
Mail To: cdnfolk-request@io.org
Type: subscribe cdnfolk

USENET

### Midwest

**CHI.FORSALE**
What's for sale in Chicago besides Oprah tickets???

**CHI.GENERAL**
The general, run of the mill, normal schmormal misc stuff.

**CHI.WEATHER**
Either it's super-hot or bitter cold. I'm not sure they need a whole newsgroup to discuss this.

**MI.JOBS**
Looking for a job in Michigan? Get your resume up online.

**MI.MAP**
Map through the many lakes and parks of Michigan.

**MI.NEWS**
After the whole militia shinanagins, poor Michigan got some bad PR.

**MILW.JOBS**
Laverne and Shirley worked in Milwaukee, and so could you.

**OH.GENERAL**
As if anything in Ohio could be more than general.

**OH.K12**
If you're a teacher in Ohio, you might get some info here.

**OH.NEWS**
Stay current with happenings all over Ohio.

**MN.GENERAL**
Minnesota basics are here.

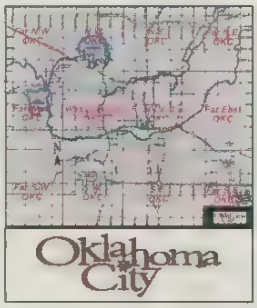
**MN.MAP**
Roam through 10,000 lakes with online geographical information.

**WI.FORSALE**
If you are into farm land, beer, and cheese, there might be fun things for you to buy in WI.

**WI.GENERAL**
Anything non-descript about

# Oklahoma City

## http://www.keytech.com/okc/okchome.shtm




Oklahoma City got a lot of hype last spring, kaboom, but that is not why it's in The Blue Pages this month. Oklahoma City has a great community Web site that deserves a little attention, if only to show other communities how to build a resourceful and entertaining networking tool for their city.

This site has got it all — news, entertainment information, local tourist spots, and clickable image maps of all the city neighborhoods (with streets, lakes, and rivers included). And once you click on a neighborhood, you get to choose to find out more about various resources within the neighborhood, such as dining places, museums, and government offices. It's great, especially for city newcomers, or those who haven't done much exploring yet. These resources all have contact information, too: snail mail addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses (when available).

The graphics are good and the server is quick (no wasted time waiting for pages to load.) There are many areas that are still under construction, but isn't that the case with most Web sites anyway? Sure, a community bulletin board, classified section, and singles connection area would probably put the site over the edge, but it's a pretty great site already — give them some time.

My only real qualm: The front-end introduction photo of Oklahoma City looks like something you'd find in a bad, very bad, postcard store from the 70s.

Wisconsin is here, maybe.

**WI.MADISON**
Madison is a super-cool town. Stay hip to the news and events.

### South

**AUSTIN.FORSALE**
I hear Austin is going really cheap.

**AUSTIN.GENERAL**
Yes, yet another general group for general information.

**AUSTIN.TALK**
Talk about Austin with people who know best.

**NOAA.WEATHER**
If you are too unmotivated to look out the window, you could always log onto the net.

**TX.FLAME**
If you wanna bash Texas, try going here.

**TX.FORSALE**
Everything in Texas is always for sale.

**TX.JOBS**
Itching to find a job somewhere hot and sweaty where people wear big hats?

### East

**DC.FORSALE**
Hey kids, buy Washington, DC! That's right, they're auctioning off the whole city.

**DC.GENERAL**
You guessed it, misc. goo about Washington DC, our illustrious capital. Blah blah blah.

**DC.HOUSING**
Looking for a place to live in the nation's capital?

**DC.JOBS**
And after you find a place to live, find a job... Or should it be the other way around?

**DC.MUSIC**
DC ROCKS with bands like Minor Threat (Fugazi now) and Slant 6.

**NE.FOOD**
If you live in the New England area and are looking for new dining info, go here.

**NE.FORSALE**
I wonder if the New England states cost more than California.

**NE.HOUSING**
Well, you were thinking about a new house, weren't you?

**NE.JOBS**
Get a job, in old cape cod.

**NJ.EVENTS**
Wow, there are actually things to do in New Jersey...

**NJ.FORSALE**
Anything and everything for sale in New Jersey.

**NJ.HOUSING**
Living in NJ is lots cheaper than living in New York.

**NYC.POLITICS**
Politics in a city as large as NYC have got to be interesting.

**NY.FORSALE**
If you've got lots of cash to spend on a condo in the sky, this is the place to do it.

**NY.GENERAL**
Just like NJ General, Chicago General, and the rest.

**NY.NYSERNET**
NYSERNET has all kinds of local services featured.

**PA.FORSALE**
And if you're lucky, you could get a deal on the Liberty Bell.

**PA.GENERAL**
General information on all things Pennsylvania.

**PHL.DANCE**
Disco a go-go in Philadelphia.

**PHL.FOOD**
There's more than just cream cheese, you know.

**PHL.MUSIC**
Get involved in the local music scene.

**PHL.OUTDOORS**
Pennsylvania is a wonderful outdoor activity state.

### West

**BA.JOBS.MISC**
Looking for a job in the Bay Area? San Francisco, Berkeley, or Oakland, CA? Check here.

**BA.PERSONALS**
San Francisco has lots of young people who are single and have Internet access....

**CA.DRIVING**
How fitting to have a newsgroup solely devoted to driving in CA. L.A. traffic, blechk.

**CA.EARTHQUAKES**
If you want to know what earthquakes are like in California, check here.

**CA.ENVIRONMENT**
Trees and mountains and oceans. Many people want to protect California's environment.

**CA.FORSALE**
Looking to buy some things, or some property or some washed-up movie star's moldy sock?

**OR.FORSALE**
Land seems to be going quickly in Oregon. Act now and get a free cubic zirconia pendant.

**OR.GENERAL**
Oregon has lots of coffee and since there is no coffee news group for Oregon yet, maybe you could talk caffeine here.

**OR.POLITICS**
I never really thought of Oregon as political, but I was wrong.

**SEATTLE.EATS**
A little fog, a little wine, and a fine dining experience.

**SEATTLE.JOBS**
Want to work for Microsoft or Boeing? Check here.

### Canada

**ONT.EVENTS**
Ontario had the best TV ads when I was growing up. I still daydream about their parks.

**ONT.SINGLES**
Looking for a mate in Ontario, or a mate who's from Ontario or wants to move there?

**ONT.GENERAL**
We wouldn't want to let Ontario's fabulous "general" newsgroup go unnoticed.

**ONT.JOBS**
And if you meet a fab Canuk in the singles newsgroup, you are going to need to get a job, too.

**TOR.GENERAL**
Toronto is great for entertainment. Get general info here.

**TOR.NEWS**
Keep current with local Toronto events.

### Canada

**CANADA INFO**
A great resource for information about Canada. Easy to navigate and pretty to look at. http://www.clo.com/~canadainfo/

**CANADA INTERNET ACCESS PROVIDERS META-LIST**

A super-huge, super-useful listing of Internet access providers serving Canada.
http://www.herbison.com/herbison/iap_canada_meta_list.html

**CANADA'S PARLIAMENT**
Explore Canada's parliament in French or English. Not particularly huge, but has nice info.
http://www.parl.gc.ca/index.html

**CHAMPLAIN CANADIAN INFORMATION EXPLORER**
Search the Canadian Government for conspiracy... No no no, but most of the online government info is accessible from here.
http://info.ic.gc.ca/champlain/champlain.html

**GAY GUIDE TO CANADA**
Business, resources, travel info for the gay community in Canada. This is a GREAT jumping point with many resources.
http://www.netfinder.com/surfwest/canada/

**INTERNET CENTRE FOR CANADIAN FASHION AND DESIGN**
Kind of an ugly Web site, considering it's geared to fashion and design, but the info's fine.
http://www.ntg-campus.com/ntg/fsh&dsgn.htm

**NFB INTERNET**
National Film Board is online with a spiffy-looking Web site.
http://www.nfb.ca/

**OUR HOME NOTRE FOYER**
In French and English, peruse the offerings of Canadian communities. Find yer niche.
http://ellesmere.ccm.emr.ca/ourhome/

**THE CANADIAN INTERNET MUSIC SOURCE**
Learn about Canadian musicians, post messages, and buy CDs.
http://www.globalx.net/cims/index.html

**THE REAL ESTATE NETWORK**
Want to move to Canada? Me neither... but if you did, this is a good place to start looking.
http://www.csi.nb.ca/celerity/

East

**AHOYNET**
This looks to be a good Internet access provider: $19.95 for unlimited use in Virginia.
http://www.ahoynet.com/Prices.html

**CAPITOL BALLROOM WASHINGTON D.C**
Listen to tunes, see what's coming to the theater, and get mucho info.
http://www.harborside.com/cdp/ballroom/ballroom.htm

**CROSSLINK INTERNET ACCESS SERVICES**
Washington, DC has access for 120 hours a month billed at $19.95. That would be roughly $214 worth of AOL.
http://www.crosslink.net/

**DC NIGHTLIFE**
This is supposed to be a message board to discuss the happenings in DC entertainment, but no one's talking yet.
http://www.proxima.com/dc/forum/nightlife/

**EQUINOX INTERNET**
Looking for Internet service in New York? Give Equinox a whirl.
http://204.89.131.111/Equinox/

**HOMENET NEW YORK**
Searching for a place to live can be tedious and brain-bending. Check out Home Net for New York state. Lots of listings.
http://www.netprop.com/resident/ny/homepage.htm

**JAMS**
Jersey Area Music Source is alive and well on the Internet Underground Music Archives.
http://mail.iuma.com/Jams//

**NEINFONET NEW ENGLAND**
The site is a bit confused and super-ugly, but there's some nice info for residents or future residents of the New England states.
http://www.neinfo.net/

**NEW JERSEY LEGISLATORS**
Get a list (though no hyperlinks) of all the legislators in New Jersey, broken down by district.
http://www.njin.net/~swayze/njlegislators.html

**NEW YORK STATE GOVERNMENT**
Search through N.Y. gophers and Web sites to find the government info you're looking for.
http://unix2.nysed.gov/ils/

**NJ TRANSIT TRAIN SCHEDULES**
Commuting to or from New Jersey? There are train schedules here to help you. Wooo Wooo.
http://www.eclipse.net/~scheurle/njt/

**NOAH HOME PAGE**
Online access to health in New York City, in English and Spanish. It's a valuable resource.
http://www.noah.cuny.edu/

**NOMIUS EVE TOURISM VIRGINIA**
Besides some token info about Virginia, there are links to Delaware, Maryland, and DC info.
http://www.nomius.com/~va/virginia.htm

**NORTH JERSEY GOLF 1995**
Wanna tee-off in the Garden State??? Get the latest greatest golf-type info here.
http://www.bergen.com/golf95/

**PEAKS OF EXCITEMENT**
Tackle the slopes of Vermont with a slew of skiing resources to get you started.
http://www.peaks.com/

**PRINCETON ONLINE COMMUNITY**
Welcome to all that is Princeton, NJ: events, politics, and *Patron* magazine.
http://www.princetonol.com/

**SOUTHEASTERN INFORMATION DEPOT**
This is a non-profit exploring the online resources (leisure, education, government, etc.) available for the Southeast U.S.
http://www.southeast.org/

**THE YANKEE TRAVELER**
This is maybe the best of resource sites about New England areas. Travel, maps, commercial links, and more.
http://www.tiac.net/users/macgyver/ne.html

**U.S SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY'S**
Check out the cute GIF of Senator Leahy from Vermont.
ftp://ftp.senate.gov/member/vt/leahy/general/pjl.html

**VA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM**
The VA Dept. of Conservation is alive and well, disseminating info about rare plants, animals, maps, and local resources.
http://www.state.va.us/dcr-dnh/vaher.html

**VERMONT LIFE**
Whether you're a Vermonter or simply want to learn more about the Green Mountain State....heh.
http://www.cit.state.vt.us/vtlife

**WASHINGTON D.C**
Weather, transportation, a funky little map of the city's background. Links to DC resources.
http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~ohad/dc.html

**WASHINGTON WEB**
Washington DC Web services, cur-

# Crisp Zine

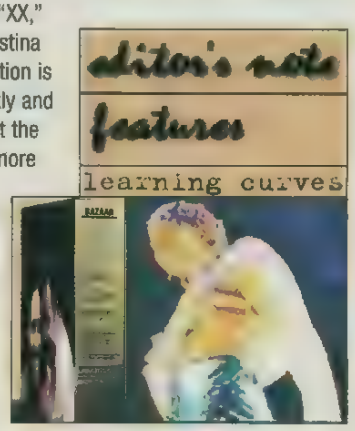
## http://www.crispzine.com/index.html

Crisp Zine has all the flavor of urban hipness that any young cyber warrior might crave. It's got ultra-smooth, high-quality graphics. It's got a diverse and exceptional collection of original content. And it's got the token Web links, net help, and tech talk that's a part of most good e-zines. Don't forget the real-time Web chat, singles area, and job postings. This site is PHAT! It has a politically young, left bias, which of course I appreciate, and it's lacking pretentions, which I also appreciate.

The zine is new, so the areas are still growing, but so far, the arts section is probably the most complete. With reviews of art, literature, and music there's bound to be something you'll enjoy. There's also a space for surfers to add reviews of artsy stuff they've recently stumbled across, which could prove to be very useful after a few months of collecting input.

Creator Anthony Tedesco is a 20-something freelance and novel writer who wanted to dive into the new medium of Web publishing. He teamed up with his younger bother, Paul (who sports HTML coding brilliance), to create a zine for the under-30 population. Between the two of them and an army of eager contributors, they've managed to put together an amazing, professional online publication. "Although we have well over 100 contributors, when push comes to mad stompin' fun, there's only three of us churning the magazine out at four in the morning: Paul Tedesco, T. Norm Elia, and me," said Anthony in an e-mail interview.

The zine also sports a women's section, appropriately titled "XX," edited by Christina Page. The section is growing quickly and advocates that the Web contain more woman-focused content. So, if you're looking for some new reading, this is definitely a site to visit.



rent events, and tons of links to DC resources.
http://www.washweb.net/

**WELCOME TO NETAXIS**
Internet access and presence providers for Stamford, CT.
http://www.netaxis.com/

**WELCOME TO VIRGINIA**
Here we have info about VA. So much info that you may not need to check elsewhere.
http://dit1.state.va.us/

## Midwest

**1993 MIDWEST FLOODS**
Curious for trivia about the Mississippi River flood of 1993?
http://rsd.gsfc.nasa.gov/rsd/images/Flood_cp.html

**ADMARK ADVERTISING**
Topeka never had it so good. This is a great Web site from a company that wants to teach you about online advertising.
http://www.tyrell.net/~admark/

**ALLIED ACCESS INC**
Here's an Internet service provider for Illinois. Lots to peruse on the Web site.
http://www.intrnet.net/

**ASIFA CENTRAL**
International Animation Association has a Midwest chapter. Groovy 3D logo.
http://laotzu.art.niu.edu/, asifa.html

**CHOKE INC**
Indie rock bands, this is a cool label from Chicago. There's an online catalog (albeit ASCII text) and some lyrics to songs.
http://kzsu.stanford.edu/uwi/sounds/choke/choke.html

**CONSCIOUS CHOICE**
It's a print zine found in Chicago and other Midwest cities, to help spawn responsible ecological stuff.
http://www.consciouschoice.com

**ESCAPE**
My friend Brian wants to escape to Montana. Maybe he can with this nifty BBS. All about the merits of the Western Boards.
http://www.imt.net/~suzan/escape.html

**FOX VALLEY FOLKLORE SOCIETY**
Info on storytelling festivals in the Midwest; including phone numbers, contact info, and hyperlinks when available.
http://www.mcs.com/~hammerd/fvfs/festlst.html

**GALENA ILLINOIS**
If you love antiques or have seen the movie *Fields of Dreams*, maybe you should visit the Galena site.
http://www.promotion.com/galena/

**GERBER HART LIBRARY & ARCHIVES**
Browse the collection at the library (located in Chicago) for lesbian, gay, and bisexual readings and events.
http://dial.illinois.net/~ghla/

**GREAT MIDWEST BANK**
Oooh, exciting. But if you're living in WI and need to be getting bank info, take a peek.
http://www.webzonecom.com/gmbank/

**HERRON SCHOOL OF ART**
If you always dreamed of attending art school in the Midwest, drop by.
http://www.herron.iupui.edu/herron_html/visComm.html

**HOLIDAY 1985 DULIN BROTHERS**
If you need a large amount of confed Midwestern-grown Angus beef, this will make your day. Though it makes me puke.
http://iweb.www.com/dulin/

**INTERACTIVE RESOURCES/JOBS**
Another jumping point for career hunting. This service will send you e-mail notices of potential jobs in the Midwest.
http://www.skypoint.com/subscribers/rmandics/index.html

**MIDNET**
A database of resources for people in the Midwest region. Everything from corporate stuff to government agencies.
http://www.mid.net/

**MIDWEST INTERNET'S RATES AND SERVICES**
Here's another Internet service provider located in the Midwest, sporting everything from connections at 300 baud (egads) to free homepages.
http://www.midwest.net/rates/rates.html

**MIDWEST LITHO ARTS**
Need a progressive printer and/or color separator? Midwest Litho just may be your answer.
http://www.mla.com/

**MIDWEST RADIO THEATRE WORKSHOP**
This school has spent 16 years developing the perfect training for radio theater. What else ya gonna do in Missouri???
http://www.mrtw.org/mrtw/

**MIDWEST STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM**
It's exactly what it sounds like. You could study in KA, MI, MN, MO, or NE so far.
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mkant/Public/FinAid/html/exchange/msep.html

**MIDWEST TODAY**
Hey, there's even a magazine for diehard Midwest fanatics. Arts, events, and socialites, oh my!
http://www.midtod.com/

**MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS**
Wanna see great art, keep on top of events, and get member info? Check out this museum.
http://www.mtn.org/MIA/

**NATIONJOB ONLINE JOBS DATABASE**
Though it says "nation," the jobs listed are mostly in the Midwest. Looking for a new career in the land of prairies and valleys?
http://www.nationjob.com/

**NERVECORE.COM**
These katz are super-cool and offer Internet access and consulting in East Lansing and Grand Rapids, MI, and also in Chicago, IL.
http://nervecore.com

**NORTHERN BREWER ON-LINE**
Wanna brew beer from the northern middle of the U.S., or at least buy your supplies? A FAQ, catalog, and much more.
http://www.nbrewer.com/

**POLEYS BIG AND TALL CLOTHING**
Listed in Yahoo! as being from the Midwest, though I can't really tell where it's from.
http://shops.net/shops/Poleys_Big_and_Tall_Clothing/

**THE DANIEL COMPANY OF SPRINGFIELD**
O.K., kidz, it's trucking online. A small site, but there's a super list of happenings in Illinois, from real estate to resumes.
http://www.woodtech.com/~realtor1/danielco.html

**THE HOMEPAGE**
Snowboarders in WI, look out. Here's a homepage especially for you. It may not be the best, but what other options do you have?
http://www.engr.wisc.edu/~sadkovic/

**THE KALAMAZOO PAGE**
This person takes Kalamazoo very, very seriously. Pay homage to the "Mecca of the Midwest."
http://www.umich.edu/~rkmead/kazoo.html

**THE RIDEMIDWEST**
Hey... hey, LOOK AT ME... hey, WAIT, this is USEFUL! Biking trails throughout the Midwest. If you know of a trail, add it.
http://team.teamnet.net/~ricko/

**TO BE CONTINUED**
A zine for the Midwestern Science Fiction and Fantasy Assoc. Layout is super-dry ASCII text, but the content is good.
http://agent2.lycos.com:8001/sf-clearing-house/zines/to-be-continued/

**UTAH REAL ESTATE**
Putting Utah in the Midwest is a bitty of a stretch, maybe, but, oh well. If you're looking for a house in the land of the Mormons, go here.
http://intele.net/~harald/index.htm

**WORLD'S LARGEST GARAGE SALE**
Get ready for summer bargains early. There's something like 70,000 vendors here once a year, in July in Evanston, IL.
http://www.interaccess.com/cola/garagesale/

## South

**1996 CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC GAMES**
The official 1996 Olympics site: everything from tickets to volunteer recruitment.
http://www.atlanta.olympic.org/

**ALABAMA STATE GOVERNMENT**
AlaWeb will point you to the many things happening in government, tourism, and general state information.
http://alaweb.asc.edu/

**AUDUBON ZOO IN NEW ORLEANS**
Lots of neat-o pictures here and some links to other zoos.
http://www-swiss.ai.mit.edu/philg/summer94/new-orleans-zoo.html

**BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY**
Visit the departments, catch up on history, or view the online card catalog.
http://www.bham.lib.al.us/

**COWBOY.NET**
"Your home on the Internet Range." Wait, there's more. "It's a wild ride that ain't no bull." Yikes. This is an Internet access provider in Oklahoma.
http://www.cowboy.net/

**DIANE'S TRAVEL**
Diane has many travel resources for Oklahoma fans. It's a great Web site because it's easy to read and useful.
http://www.tulsa.com/diane.html

**DYKKI'S CUSTOM WEATHER SERVICE**
Wanna know if a hurricane is headed for North Carolina?
http://sunsite.unc.edu/dykki/ncweather.html

**GEORGIA INTL HORSE PARK**
You've been waiting months for this URL. No need to be shy, I can tell.
http://www.mindspring.com/~conyers/gihp.html

**GEORGIA STATE**
Regularly updated with the usual span of information, Georgia Online is a big site.
http://www.State.Ga.US/

**HAWAII HOME PAGE**
You can't get much further south in the U.S. than Hawaii. This is one of the very best regional sites I've found.
http://www.hawaii.net/cgi-bin/search_display-hhp.tcl

**KENTUCKY ATLAS & GAZETTEER COUNTIES**
Examine Kentucky maps, broken down by county, for a probing look into the state.
http://www.uky.edu/KentuckyAtlas/kentucky-atlas.html

**LOUISVILLE VISITOR CENTER**
I like Louisville mostly because it's where the Palace Brothers are. But if you like it for other reasons, there's lots here.
http://www.iglou.com/lou/

**NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS**
Exactly what it says it is, with tourism info and an 800-number. It's the official site.
http://banzai.neosoft.com/citylink/mardigr/default.html

**NORTH GEORGIA TROUT ON-LINE**
I have to admit, it was the title that attracted me to this page. Trout Online is irresistible.
http://www.mindspring.com/~ngtrout/gofish.html

**OKLAHOMA CITY**
Oklahoma has surprised me with an array of great Web sites. This one is pretty good, too — info about the city and its resources.
http://www.keytech.com/okc/okchome.shtml

**OKLAHOMA REAL ESTATE JUNCTION**
Want a commercial space, a residential plot of land, or a retirement community in Oklahoma?
http://www.valleynet.com/~webcity/okjunc/

**OKLAHOMA STATE GOVERNMENT**
Oklahoma has one of the best state-run Web sites. Great info for all you kids lucky enough to live in the OK state.
http://www.oklaosf.state.ok.us/

**SC'S APPALACHIAN WEB**
Government, news, weather, tourism, and more for the Appalachian area of South Carolina.
http://www.acog.greenville.sc.us/

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**
Get all the info you ever wanted (O.K., maybe not all of it) about the government in N. Carolina.
http://www.sips.state.nc.us/

**TEXAS GOVERNMENT**
"Texas, it's like a whole other country." I can hardly contain my laughter. This is indeed a huge Web site chock-full of info.
http://www.texas.gov/

**TEXAS BEST**
These Texans are proud. This is a big list of many Texas treasures, like the Blue Bell Creamery.
http://pages.prodigy.com/TX/connie_black/home.html

**THE GUMBO PAGES**
The Gumbo Pages are a musical, culinary, and cultural information source about New Orleans.
http://www.webcom.com/~gumbo/

**THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA**
Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak, I mean the Virtual Oak Tree. Virtual Oklahoma is a good source for tourists.
http://www.icon.net/commercial/commerce/index.html

**THE TEXAS SENATE**
Committees, Congresspeople, agendas, and schedules.
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN**
If everything in Texas is so big, it makes sense that this is a monster-huge Web site, with info about the school and state.
http://www.utexas.edu/

**VICTORYLAND GREYHOUND PARK**
Dog racing is disgusting and cruel, but if you must get info, here's the place to find it.
http://www.worldaccess.com/vl/

**WELCOME TO THE HEART OF DIXIE**
Everything Alabama. That's what it says, and it delivers! This site looks great and has lots of info.
http://isl-garnet.uah.edu/ALABAMA/alabama.html

**AREA 51 RESEARCH CENTER**
We couldn't have a regional section without UFOs in Nevada.... Learn about Area 51.
http://www.cris.com/~Psyspy/area51/

**ARIZONA INFO-NET**
Despite the fact that it took forever for the page to load, there is mucho mucho info here.
http://www.primenet.com/~randmo/

**ARIZONA STATE PARKS**
Get park info for all over the state of Arizona, buy stuff at the gift shop, or visit the park site of the month.
http://www.pr.state.az.us/

**#CALIFORNIA**
Many IRC communities have taken to the Web; so has channel #california. It's a pretty big site for and by the IRC people.
http://www-scf.usc.edu/~albertwa/california/

**CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN ASSEMBLY**
A very well-done site for all that is elephant in California. Skads of info here.
http://www.he.tdl.com/~cra/cra.html

**CALIFORNIA STATE HOME PAGE**
Get the low-down straight from Governor Pete Wilson. YUCK!
http://www.ca.gov/

**CEGI CALIFORNIA POLITICIANS & CANDIDATES**
Super-useful site dedicated to organizing the many political parties and offices in California.
http://www.cpsr.org/cpsr/states/california/califpols.html

**COLORADO OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER**
Keep pace with the raging outdoor scene in Colorado. Links and special program info.
http://www.gorp.com/coec/coec.htm

**COLORADO VIRTUAL TOURIST**
Monster mega list of all kinds of resources for the state of Colorado. It's big big big.
http://www.capcon.com/virtualtourist/

**COLUMBIA RIVER SAILING**
Small, no-frills site, but of much interest to boaters. Links, info on clubs, references, and a nifty local knowledge section.
http://www.teleport.com/~lgbarker/columbia.html

**DISNEYLAND PARK ANAHEIM CALIFORNIA**
If you're planning a trip to Disneyland, this is the place to check for directions, events, and hotel accommodations.
http://www.best.com/~dijon/disney/parks/disneyland/

**ENVISIONET INC**
Internet access provider for Denver and its suburbs.
http://www.envisionet.net/

**FORTNET FORT COLLINS**
A great, great, great site for all that is happening in Fort Collins, CO, home of Colorado State University.
http://www.fortnet.org/

**GETNET INTERNATIONAL**
Internet access provider in Arizona. This company has one of the better homepages as far as service providers go.
http://www.getnet.com/

**GRAND CANYON TOUR**
These kats will tell you why to backpack the Canyon, where to go, and how to prepare.
http://turnpike.net/metro/H/hud/CANYON.HTM

**LAS VEGAS LAWMAKERS**
Though as bold and tacky as the city itself, this site has mucho info for the politically minded.
http://www.vegas.com/nevada/lawmaker/

**MAPS OF MONTANA**
Maps, maps, maps. County and city maps in GIF or document format. Very cool site.
http://nris.msl.mt.gov/gis/mtmaps.html

**MONTANAWEB MAIN MENU**
Super-cool site for all things relating to Montana, everything from culture foo foo like museums and galleries to real estate.
http://montanaweb.com/montanaweb/

**NEVADA STATE FAIR**
"The Fair promises to bring a smile to your face and joy to your heart," according to the Web site. Heh.
http://www.aztech-cs.com/nsf/y-home.html

# Southeast U.S.

## http://www.southeast.org/

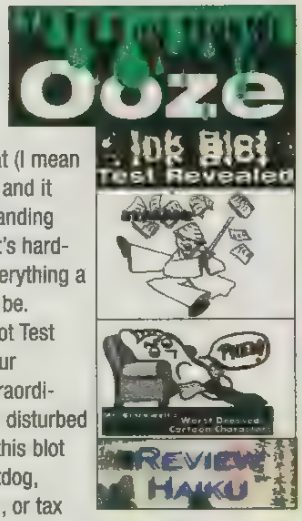
Of all the regional databases I've seen, this is probably the best. The layout and design are exceptional (no cheesy postcard photos or fluorescent blinking things), and the links are thorough and useful. The database serves Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, so if you live in one of these states, lucky you.

The site breaks down resources into four main groups: Business, Government, Education, and Leisure (the latter includes artsy culture and entertainment goop). Once you select an area of interest, you get a list of states to choose from, then a list of resources in your category. The lists aren't that long, since they include only the most significant highlights, with hyperlinks, of course, for additional information, pictures, etc. It's a simple concept, but you'd be surprised at how many organizations do this poorly.

Probably the most useful thing here is the government information section, which links surfers to maps, census reports, legislature issues, and state and local governments. And, if you aren't from the Southeastern U.S. but plan on traveling there (spring break in Florida or Mardi Gras in Louisiana), check out the leisure sections to get the buzz on hot spots for entertainment and tourists. We all know what business is about — Internet access providers, local commerce, and money money shopping. And the super bonus: it's searchable! It's a great site and gets two thumbs up from me.

# Ooze

## http://www.io.com/~ooze/




Ooze has stolen my heart. Quite simply, it's fantastic. It's intelligent. It's hysterical. It looks great (I mean super duper great), and it sparkles with outstanding wit. It's satire and it's hard-core serious. It's everything a good e-zine should be.

In "The Ink Blot Test Revealed" article, our esteemed Ooze extraordinaire writes: "Many disturbed people misidentify this blot as a misshapen hotdog, wounded mastodon, or tax collector with a large Armani briefcase... but this card represents what you think of your father." Tell me that isn't hysterical. And in the Haiku Review section, in which the staff picks anything ever invented to review and then structures the review in Haiku format, you'll find something like this:

*"FROG BOG— Video game for the Intellivision*

*Dueling frogs eat bugs.*
*Hop! Hop! Excellent gameplay!*
*4-bit graphics rock!"*

Yes, indeed, Ooze is brilliant. So far, there are six issues of Ooze. All of them are available via an FTP site (**ftp://io.com/pub/usr/ooze/**), or on the Web site. It's also possible to download the entire zine in a self-extracting file (if you're lucky enough to be using a Macintosh computer). I suggest you read them all and then demand that the creator, Matt Patterson, hurry up and get #7 out the door. It's perfect for any bitter, angst-ridden, discombobbled humanoid who wants to have little fun.

**NORTHWEST OPERA SCHEDULES**
Simple to navigate, with info on operas in Seattle, Tacoma, Vancouver, and Portland.
http://weber.u.washington.edu/~dvictor/opera/nwopera.html

**NORTHWEST'S BEST COMMERCE AND TOURISM**
It's rather small, but there's some good info hiding in these pages about Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.
http://www.dmi.net/uspacnw/

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST TRAVEL**
It looks small at first, but dig around and you'll find some great stuff, from rental cars to campgrounds, festivals, etc.
http://www.ultimate.org/world/na/us/pnw/pntp.html

**STATE OF COLORADO**
Keep posted on the happenings in Colorado, especially sneaky legislative bills, ahem.
http://www.state.co.us/

**STATE OF MONTANA**
Agencies, universities, libraries, and tourist info. All about the wonderful state of Montana.
http://www.mt.gov/

**THE INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO DENVER**
Navigate your way through a "zoomable" map of Denver to get the scoop on all its events.
http://www.milehigh.com/webad/

**THE STASH**
Entertainment in Portland (and some other NW Coast cities) live online. Everything from events to employment opportunities.
http://www.aracnet.com/~stash/

**THE TOTAL YELLOWSTONE PAGE**
Of the many sites devoted to Yellowstone Park, this is definitely one of the best, with history, wildlife, news, camping, and the usual tourist stuff.
http://acs1.byu.edu/~uhlerjw/yellowstone.html

**THE WACKY WYOMING WEB**
Positively a great Web site, with all kinds of info and cool pictures. The map is outstanding.
http://math.uwyo.edu/State_Links.html

**WELCOME TO NORTHWEST VOYAGER**
Regularly updated, with a suave layout and mega content, this is a great Web site.
http://caboose.com/

**WY'S BIGHORN MOUNTAIN FLYFISHING PAGE**
Wanna flyfish in the Big Goose Creek? History, local info, and a few links to other resources.
http://wave.sheridan.wy.us/~kelly_b/fishpage.html

**YOSEMITE HOMEPAGE**
Get history, news, accommodations, shopping, and camping info here. And that's just for starters. It's big.
http://mlode.com/YosemiteGold/yosemite/index.html

### Investment Sites

**BDD**
Worried about how the stars might affect your stock picks? *Dell Horoscope Magazine* keeps tabs on the planets and your portfolio.
http://www.bdd.com/horo1/bddhoro1.cgi/horo1

**CNN BUSINESS NEWS**
A clean and well-organized site, CNN Business News informs you about the latest financial events, and has an archive of recent news stories.
http://www2.cnn.com/BIZ/index.html

**EDGAR DATABASE OF CORPORATE INFORMATION**
The Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval System lets you peruse documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.
http://www.sec.gov/edgarhp.htm

**ETHICAL BUSINESS**
Still in development, this site promises to eventually list ethically and environmentally oriented businesses, products, etc. Pretty cool, huh?
http://www.bath.ac.uk/Centres/Ethical/

**EXPERIMENTAL STOCK MARKET DATA**
Price and volume charts for 300 NYSE stocks, plus historical volume, high, low, and closing prices. Also, mutual fund charts.
http://www.ai.mit.edu/stocks.html

**FINANCENET**
Financed by the U.S. government, it's a clearinghouse for public offerings of govt. assets (federal, state, and local).
http://www.financenet.gov/

**FINANCENTER**
It provides free personal finance calculation programs, as well as current interest rate quotes, reports, and more.
http://www.financenter.com/resources/

**FINANCIAL ECONOMICS LECTURE HALL**
Too long since your MBA study days? Check out the course syllabi, assignments, lecture notes, and exams of finance faculty.
http://www.finweb.com/lecturehall.html

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION LINK LIBRARY**
Maintained by John Russell, this site links to financial Web sites around the world. Links are categorized by country.
http://www.mbnet.mb.ca:80/~russell/

**FINWEB**
Bazillion links to net resources on economics and finance-related topics, organized into categories: Electronic, Publishing, Databases, and Other Servers.
http://www.finweb.com/

**GNN PERSONAL FINANCE CENTER**
Among the goodies here are "The Internet Investor" column, a list of personal finance resources, and news.
http://gnn.com/gnn/meta/finance/index.html

**HOLT REPORT**
Get an update of U.S. and foreign financial markets, with data on volume, highs, lows, and volatility.
gopher://wuecon.wustl.edu:671/00/holt/holt.current

**INVESTING FOR THE PERPLEXED**
Provides investment advice, including a three-year investment strategy, for folks who find the whole concept a puzzle.
http://www.inch.com/~robertny/invest/menu.html

**INVESTMENT BROKERAGES GUIDE**
You'll find summaries and lists of investment brokerages from around the world, including hyperlinks and e-mail addresses.
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jdg/invest_brokers.html

**INVESTMENT RESEARCH**
Articles about the outlook for the stock market and how to become a disciplined investor; quote server links; and more.
http://www.thegroup.net/invest/ichome.htm

**INVESTOR INTOUCH**
Receive investor relations information and equity research on

15,000+ companies, and stay in touch with your favorite firm's stock price.
http://www.money.com/htbin/imagemap/bluebar?16,24

**INVESTORSEDGE**
Designed to empower the online investor. A bevy of free services, including quotes, news, corporate profiles, market indices.
http://www.irnet.com/

**INVESTORWEB**
InvestorWEB publishes company information, and lets you make decisions on whether to invest.
http://www.investorweb.com/iwebhome.htm

**MCI BUSINESS SUMMARY**
Stay current on the day's happenings in business with brief articles supplied by Reuters.
http://www.fyionline.com/infoMCI/update/BUSINESS-MCI.html

**MONEY & INVESTING UPDATE**
This service of the *Wall Street Journal* requires you to register, then gives you access to a rich selection of investor news.
http://update.wsj.com/

**MUTUAL FUNDS**
A guide to mutual fund resources, with profiles of mutual fund managers and articles on trends in the industry.
http://www.ultranet.com/~maria/funds.html

**NETWORTH**
Info for individual investors, using data supplied by fund and other financial companies.
http://networth.galt.com/

**NVESTOR**
nVESTOR is a free, real-time stock market game. Invest a fake $100,000 as you will.
http://www.investor-net.com/

**SECURITY APL QUOTE SERVER**
Plug in a ticket symbol, get a quote. There's also a chance to check overall market activity on the Market Watch page.
http://www.secapl.com/cgi-bin/qs

**SIERRA ON-LINE STOCK MARKET CHALLENGE**
Another Wall Street simulation game, in which you try to increase the value of your pretend portfolio.
http://smc.sierra.com/

**SILICON INVESTOR**
A place for people interested in technology stocks. You'll find indices, industry news, a chart generator, and a personalized profile system.
http://www.techstocks.com/

**THE ECONOMICS/MARKETS/INVESTMENTS INDEX**
A searchable index of data, news, services, and more for the financial community. Check out the Business Cycle Indicators page.
http://www.mlinet.com/mle/search2.htm

**TIPNET**
For a price, you'll get a searchable database to find investment info, plus quotes and lots more.
http://www.tipnet.com/

**WALL STREET DIRECTORY**
This site lists 2,000+ trading/investment products and services — both on and off the net. Great links!
http://www.cts.com:80/~wallst/w_about.htm

**WALL STREET NET**
Provides the latest on corporate debt and equity financings, monitors companies, has archive data on past transactions.
http://www.netresource.com/wsn/

## Beer

**ALL ABOUT BEER**
This is the best beer-related site I think I've found. Nice layout and tons and tons of infobytes to keep yer interest.
http://www.w2.com/docs2/c/allaboutbeer.html

**BEER IN A BOX INC**
Need some home brewing supplies but too lazy to use the phonebook? Start here.
http://www.mcs.net/~beerinab/beerhome.html

**BEER SURVEY**
Register your vote for the Web's most popular beers. Come on, peer pressure, everyone's doing it. Even I filled it out.
http://www2.magmacom.com/~giguere/beerquiz.htm

**BEERMASTER**
Don't mess with these beer fans, they take it super-serious. It's a big big site.
http://BeerMasters.com/BeerMasters/

**BUDWEISER ON-LINE**
Budweiser is online and advertising on Yahoo! (That's why I visited, anyway.) Yes, Bud, your marketing dollars are well-spent.
http://www.budweiser.com/

# Delphi Games

**http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/interact.html**

O.k., online gaming fans. These may not compare to the shoot 'em up, spit 'em out games like *Doom* and *Descent*, varoooom. But for interactive Web games, they're fun and entertaining. And there's no proprietary software to purchase, configure, or hog storage space on your machine.

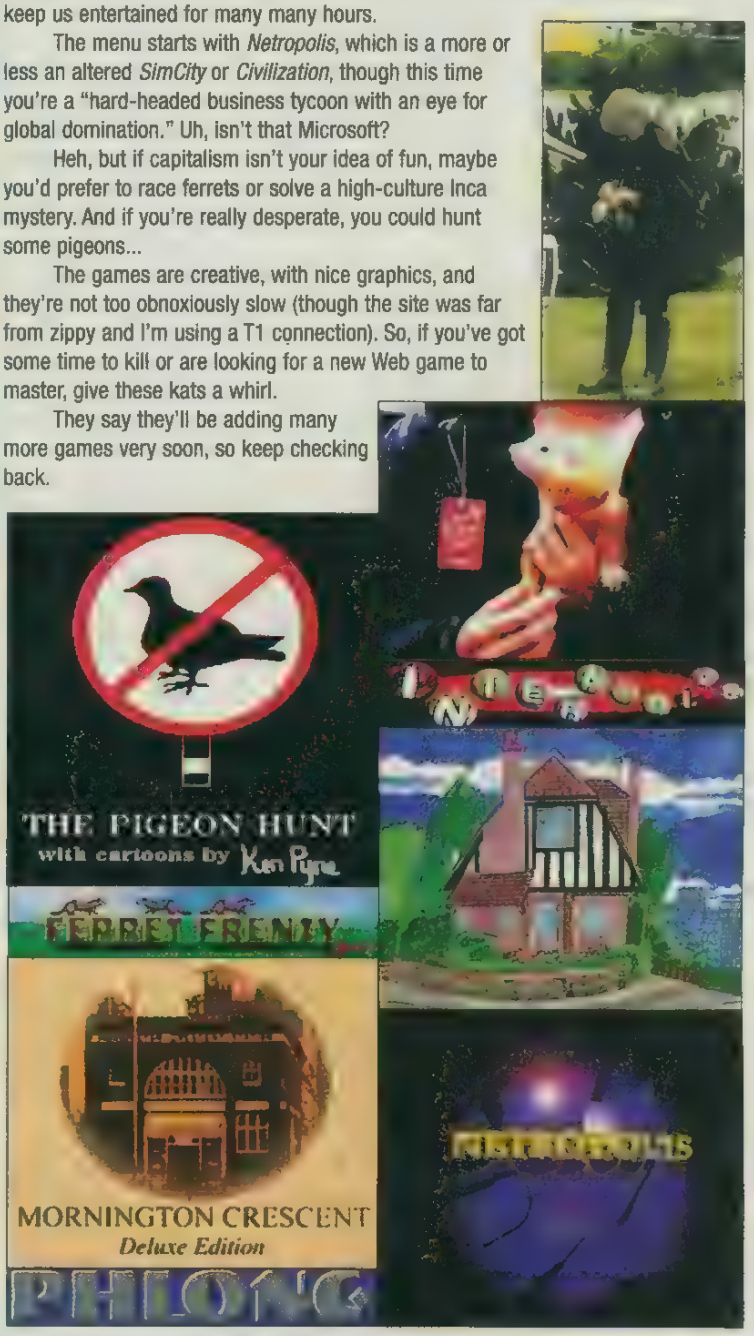
Delphi, which used to be a major provider of Internet access via shell accounts, has built itself a whole new image and is reaching for the moon with games, games, games. This U.K. Web site so far has five interactive dazzlers to keep us entertained for many many hours.

The menu starts with *Netropolis*, which is a more or less an altered *SimCity* or *Civilization*, though this time you're a "hard-headed business tycoon with an eye for global domination." Uh, isn't that Microsoft?

Heh, but if capitalism isn't your idea of fun, maybe you'd prefer to race ferrets or solve a high-culture Inca mystery. And if you're really desperate, you could hunt some pigeons...

The games are creative, with nice graphics, and they're not too obnoxiously slow (though the site was far from zippy and I'm using a T1 connection). So, if you've got some time to kill or are looking for a new Web game to master, give these kats a whirl.

They say they'll be adding many more games very soon, so keep checking back.



**BYOB HOME PAGE**
Be Your Own Brewmaster (BYOB). I like the title. A guide with over 50 recipes.
http://www.byob.com/

**DISCOVERY PRESENTS MICHAEL JACKSON'S BEER HUNTER CD-ROM**
This is just too hysterical to try and describe. Go there and see.
http://RealBeer.com/discovery/beerhunter.html

**DOGFISH HEAD BREWING & EATS**
It's the season of the MicroBrew. Small breweries are popping up everywhere, even in Delaware.
http://www.dmv.com/dogfish/

**RED WHITE & BREW**
"Friends don't let friends drink cheap beer." Whatever.
http://wheat.symgrp.com/symgrp/brew/

**REDHOOK ALE BREWERY**
Redhook is indeed one of my favorite beers, so if you like it, too, and want to learn more, about the company, visit its Web site.
http://www.halcyon.com/rh/rh.htm

**THE BEER CLASSIFIED ADS**
This is where beer makers, distributors, and vendors get to sell and advertise and network.
http://www.beerinfo.com/~jlock/beerads0.html

**VALHALLA BREWING**
Want to spend eternity brewing and drinking beer? These katz do, too. Check out the site for brewing links and general info.
http://www.csn.net/~swroger0/

## Games

**ATLANTIS**
Chat with people from around the world in a game based on the lost island of Atlantis.
http://www.cs.stedwards.edu/~tmendol/atlantis.html

**BAT QUIZ**
Yes, you too can test your knowledge of bats with the masters of Night Bat Quiz.
http://www.lhs.berkeley.edu/BatQuiz.html

**CHANCES R**
Hey, you could recycle those lottery numbers and win free dinners if you live in Florida....
http://palmbeach.net/win/

**EMAIL GAMES**
Join this game from the Web and read information or send a request to signup@pbm.com. More fantasy role-playing stuff.
http://www.pbm.com/oly/

**INTERACTIVE PAGES AT DELPHI**
Delphi Internet U.K. is super-cool, and it has many many games. Check it out.
http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/interact.html

**MADDOG'S STUDIO**
Anyone interested in online gaming of any nature; the Web; e-mail; MUDs and MOOs; graphics; or text should visit this site.
http://www.best.com/~maddog/

**MATCH 23 GAME**
23 (and 42) are the magic numbers of all life-giving resources. So you should play this game.
http://www.gold.net/users/fj17/index.htm

**METROPOLIS**
Multi-user Internet game where you get to build cities and destroy other people's cities...
http://www.delphi.co.uk/netropolis/

**PHLONG MAIN PAGE**
Delphi has so many neat-o games I can only assume this one is good, too.
http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/phlong/Phlong_title.html

**THE BOOK OF THE TOWER**
A pretty Web site and another chatty type fantasy game. Could be fun. You decide.
http://www.riverbend.net/tower/

**THE FOREST WEB PAGE**
Another chat type game on the Web. About, you guessed it, a fantasy in a forest based in the medieval period. Shocker.
http://ftoomsh.progsoc.uts.edu.au/forest/

**THE FRUIT GAME**
Take fruit off the table in a game of stunning logic and master wit. O.K., it's silly, but try it.
http://www.2020tech.com/fruit/

## Zines

**ENTERZONE**
Enter enterzone with an open mind and lots of time. It ain't the prettiest but there's mucho inside. Art, culture, etc., etc.
http://enterzone.berkeley.edu/enterzone.html

**F MAGAZINE**
Very cool attitude zine about whatever anyone wants to write about — music, ideas, it's all there. Cool graphics, too.
http://www.musicwest.com/fmag/

**FIREHORSE**
Every day there are more and more great zines. This one is about alternative culture.
http://www.peg.apc.org/~firehorse/welcome.html

**GRAY AREAS MAGAZINE**
Gray Areas has been pick of a day, exploring controversial topics about everything.
http://w3.gti.net/grayarea/

**KRAD ELITE-O NEET-O ZINE**
"An institution for all mankind." Well, egads, have they got a mission. Young hipsters with urban desires. Very very cool.
http://rainbow.rmii.com/~dkobey/

**NEWSTORY AT SHERRYART**
A diverse zine exploring everything from how to raise two children as a widow to "how to pick a Multimedia title."
http://www.sherryart.com/newstory/newstory.html

**OOZE HOMEPAGE**
This is my very favorite e-zine this month. Ideas and thought and satire at their finest.
http://www.io.com/~ooze/

**THE ANARCHY ORGANIZATION**
Here's a great zine for anarchists, or people who hate anarchists and wanna see what they're up to. Amazing.
http://www.lglobal.com/TAO/

**THE BASEMENT MAGAZINE**
Poetry, music, ideas, and band interviews. Typical punky/indie zine thing. Groovy.
http://www.ios.com/~dizzyman/

**THE FIX**
"What's happening in Boston?," you might ask yourself (or you might not). This zine will give you a few clues.
http://www.boston.com/thefix/

**THE LOOK ON-LINE FASHION SERVICE**
This is supposed to help you learn about the fashion industry. As if anyone would want to.
http://www.arch-online.com/look/

**WELCOME TO ELLE**
I pretty much hate fashion magazines, but kudos to *Elle* for putting together a fantastic fantastic site. Expect a review.
http://www.ellemag.com/

**WELCOME TO HOT LAVA**
Mag from southern California that wants to be the best place for new art, culture, music, and photography. It's very good.
http://www.interverse.com/interverse/lava/index.html

**XX/CHISP ZINE**
This is an amazing zine. It looks great, has great content, and I don't know enough good things to say about it. See the sidebar.
http://www.crispzine.com/contents/xx/xx.html

## TV Stations

**CLEVELAND'S OWN WJW-TV8**
WJW has a pretty decent graphic style, while content covers station personalities, programming, and Neil's One Tank Trips.
http://www.zdepth.com/wjw/

**FOX17 GATEWAY**
Cool graphics make this West Michigan TV site Web-happy, but watch out for the spider-mouse (or is that a mouse-spider?).
http://www.wxmi.com/

**KABB FOX 29 SAN ANTONIO**
Very nice Web design, especially for a TV station. Well, it does produce the only 9 p.m. newscast in the San Antonio area. Also look at its regular programming schedule.
http://www.kabb.com/

**KCBS 2NET**
Great design, but it's from L.A., so you'd expect that. Original content includes "The Twisted Tales of Felix the Cat."
http://www.kcbs2.com/

**KFXF FOX7 FAIRBANKS ALASKA**
TV from Alaska. Cool. The homepage does blink, however, but it's got tons of links to all sorts of TV show sites, plus its own "Comedy Club" section.
http://www.polarnet.com/Users/Fox7/

**KGTV HOME PAGE**
San Diego's Channel 10 is mostly news, although it does sponsor its own World Wide Web club.
http://www.kgtv.com/

**KHSL-TV HOME PAGE**
Chico, CA's Channel 12 Web site sure isn't pretty, and the content isn't linked very well, but there is a whole schedule of community events.
http://www.pinsight.com/~khsltv/

**KOMO TV4 IN SEATTLE**
News of all flavors on KOMO, including current and entertainment. Where's the grunge? Duh.
http://www.fishcomm.com/fishcomm/tv4/chanfour.html

**KPDX FOX 49 PORTLAND OR**
KPDX employs spare design to achieve a functional homepage, with ready-to-read layout enumerating all areas of content.
http://www.kpdx.com/

**LAS VEGAS ONLINE**
Sponsored by KLAS, Channel 8, this site is more than just news. It features all sorts of content about Las Vegas life. Do they say, "Las Vegas has KLAS?"
http://www.infi.net/vegas/online/

**WCVB CHANNEL 5 BOSTON**
Really neat graphics make "New England's Television News Leader" a good place to drop by, and the extensive section about managing your money is worthwhile for people all over.
http://www.wcvb.com/

**WFAA-TV DALLAS-FORT WORTH**
Channel 8, the "Spirit of Texas," has big graphics and hosts the "Computer Corner," a regular report on the Internet.
http://www.wfaa.com/

**WGN-TV CHICAGO USA**
The homepage greets you with a live view of Chicago, taken from the top of the John Hancock building.
http://www.wgntv.com/

**WLNS-TV6 HOME PAGE**
Lansing, MI's TV6 site has the regular local content, although its weather section is called "StormCenter6," which gives you some idea of the weather in Michigan.
http://www.wlns.com/

**WMGM-TV**
Atlantic City's WMGM doesn't have huge amounts of content, but it's got a very clean graphic style.
http://acy1.digex.net/~wmgmtv/

Thanks again to everyone who's been forwarding URLs to include in The Site Pages.

As if you haven't been getting enough amazing URLs to dive through already, expect even more Web site reviews to come in March. Lots more!! There's NO backlog. New sites out there. We *like* people wanna help you maximize your online time by assisting you with getting there quickly and easily.

And, hey LOOK, all these sites are hyperlinked on the CD ROM and our Web site! I'll vet them. Promise. — *BG*

# C·A·N·D·Y·L·A·N·D

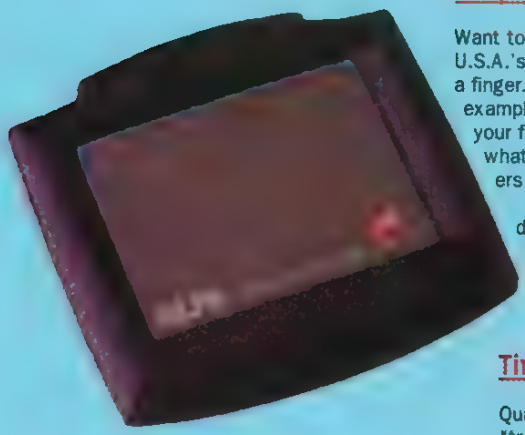
## ADULT PLAYGROUND

**CHECK IT OUT!**

18+ This web site is intended for a mature audience. Must be over 18 years.

http://www.candyland.com/net

# peripherali



## Keep In Touch

Want to make a point, at least on your desktop? Well, stop mousing around and try out the ALPS U.S.A.'s GlidePoint, a mouse or trackball replacement that controls your cursor with the touch of a finger. Available for PC or Mac, this slick little unit is activated with a tap. To drag-and-drop, for example, just tap twice and hold your finger down on the second tap, drag the item by moving your finger, then "drop" it by removing your finger from the GlidePoint. Basically, you do just what you would if you owned a PowerBook or one of the growing number of notebook computers that are using a touchpad for cursor control.

According to the company, the GlidePoint is ergonomically desirable due to its low demands on wrist and arm movement. Plus, there's a lifetime guarantee. Drop on over to the company's site (**http://www.alpsusa.com/glidepnt.html**). We've seen these for sale at local computer stores for about $59.

## Tired of Those Dreary Net Searches?

Quarterdeck's PC-based World Wide Web search system, WebCompass, promises to be a "truly intelligent" search agent. This stand-alone product overlays other net search engines like Yahoo (**http://www.yahoo.com/**) and WebCrawler (**http://www.webcrawler.com/**), which means that it harnesses all of their capabilities at once.

Searches can be configured to retrieve information not only from Web pages, but also from Usenet newsgroup postings. Completed searches don't just yield a long group of listings; instead, WebCompass generates an abstract of each relevant document, then catalogues the abstracts and site addresses into an index. It also automatically eliminates duplicate hits. If there's a subject that you want to stay up-to-date on, WebCompass will provide automatic daily, weekly, or monthly updates, depending on your needs.

To use WebCompass, which at press time was expected to have a street price of less than $100, you must have an Intel 486, Pentium, or compatible PC with Windows 3.1, Windows 95, or Windows NT. A CD-ROM drive is also required, as is hard disk space of 37 MB. To order, call 310 309 3700, visit Quarterdeck's Web site (**http://www.quarterdeck.com**), or send an e-mail query to **info@quarterdeck.com**.

## Picture This

Seattle FilmWorks of — you guessed it, Seattle, WA — invites any and all photographers to start using their Internet service to pick up pictures. All they have to do is get a customer number (done by filling out an online form asking for an e-mail address, name, snail-mail address, and phone). Usually within a day, they'll get an e-mail verifying their customer ID.

Then, photographers need only send in their rolls of film to the company. Once the rolls are received and processed, the company sends back a "delivery notification" e-mail enclosing a roll ID number. Then, photographers simply head over to the Seattle FilmWorks' Web site (**http://www.filmworks.com/**), click on the area labeled Download PhotoWorks Software, enter in their customer number and their roll ID, and viola.

Well, *almost* viola. Before photographers download the images (the company bills them as PhotoMail images), they must download the most current version of PhotoWorks software. Software is available from the site for Microsoft Windows 3.1 or 3.11, Windows 95, or Windows NT, and for the Macintosh.

Call the Seattle FilmWorks Customer Service number (800 345 6967), or go to the Web site for current pricing information.

## Making 3D Sound Possible

Labtec's Imager 3-D Audio System, LCS-9210: It's a small and unobtrusive component, about two inches wide and four inches tall. The same beige color of plastic that encases the majority of the home computer world is interrupted only by the thin yellow button on its face. With all the snazzy computer peripherals available, and the piles of paper stacking up, desk space is at a premium, so a small component is a good component.

The intention of this tiny device is to intercept any sounds your computer sends out before they get to the speakers, and change them so they will sound like they're in 3D. Our first response was: "What is 3D sound??" Then, we listened, and our response was: This is what stereo was supposed to do — make the sound seem to envelop the listener. Running the Imager through the cheapest little speakers we could find seemed the best way to put it through its paces. The gunshots, screams, and grunts of *Doom II* didn't seem to gain much from the Imager, until we really cranked up the volume. And even then, we weren't exactly ducking to avoid the shotgun blasts.

Music, however, was a different story. Tom Waits' voice on one of his CDs had a much broader sound. It's like the sound is lifted up a few feet and spread over a wider radius. It's like what happens when you switch on the equalizer on your home stereo. Sound expansion.

Still, the cheap little speakers we were using weren't much improved by the Imager; a better set made the effect of the Imager substantially better. The Imager costs $39.99 and is available from Labtec Enterprises. Reach the company at 206 896 2000, or write it at P.O. Box 1469, Vancouver, WA 98668-1469.

## Have a Ball With This Camera

If you're putting off buying a scanner and don't have use for a high-end video camera, maybe the QuickCam from Connectix will fit into your budget. Generally found in catalogs for about $100, this easy-to-use digital still and video camera is available for Mac or Windows systems. It will get you spying, taking still video images, and recording movies faster than you thought possible.

All you have to do is plug in the cable, install the software, set the camera in a convenient location, and you're ready. One nifty use for the QuickCam is plugging into CU-SeeMe reflector sites around the world (see our How To on pages 69-70 to learn how to do this). Don't expect to make it to Hollywood with the QuickCam, but you'll be able to capture six-bit grayscale video and still images — good enough for sending images via e-mail and capturing snippets of a meeting or grandchildren to send away. You'll also be able to spiff up school projects with a personal narration via video, and leave a message for a coworker.

**Connectix Corporation**
2655 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403
Phone: 800 950 5880, 415 571 5100
Fax: 415 571 5195
Web: **http://www.connectix.com/**
e-mail: **info@connectix.com**

## Plug 'n Play ISDN?

Can the promise of ISDN be yours for a mere $300? Well, if the BitSURFR has anything to do with it, it might. The Motorola BitSURFR is a digital, high-speed ISDN Terminal Adapter that, as you would expect, supports simultaneous voice and data. Aimed at the small office or home office user, the BitSURFR package consists of hardware as well as software that helps you to connect your computer, telephone, and fax machine to an ISDN line. You should hit speeds of 70,000 bits per second when you're internetting over an ISDN line, which means, hopefully, higher productivity (hey, and faster *Toy Story* movie clip downloads, too). And yes, you can talk on the phone at the same time, or send a fax.

Of course, you'll have to pay for ISDN service from your telephone company, if it's available (most major cities are offering the service nowadays for about $25 a month). Since to date, the biggest complaint we've heard about ISDN is the price of the modems, this low-priced offering may be the start of ISDN for the masses. Call Motorola for a dealer near you at 800 365 6456. Or, check out the Web site (**http://www.mot.com**).

## The Power to Save Your Back

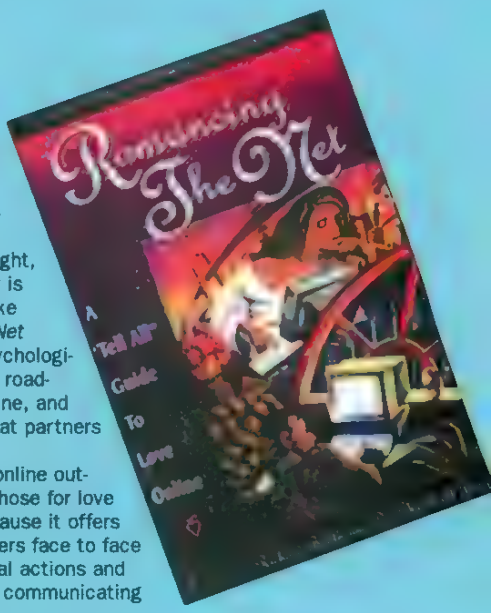
Get sick of sitting around all day in the old-fashioned "proper" posture position — in other words, straight up? Well, the folks at Metamorphosis Design & Development, Inc., who also created the PowerStation family of WorkStation Products, hope that they can take you away from all that. They've designed desktops for comfort and health.

PowerStations feature tilt-adjustable worksurfaces with what the company calls a "UserPocket" carved from the front of the desktop. This makes it easier for you to rest your arms during a long surfing session. Reclining is a big factor in the company's ergonomic theory, and the system is designed to allow you to do so and still be able to work efficiently.

With prices ranging from $599 to nearly $1,800, these systems are no small investment. But then, your health is priceless... Drop the company a line at 1347 Spring Street, Atlanta, GA 30309; give them a call at 404 875 6731 or 800 700 9141; or e-mail them at **metaguy@mindspring.com**. Metamorphosis' Web site is **http://www.mindspring.com~metaguy/products.html**.

## Don't Swoon Like a Goon

***Romancing The Net:***
***A "Tell-All" Guide to Love Online***
by Richard Booth and Dr. Marshall Jung
Prima Publishing 916 632 4400
ISBN: 0-7615-0322-6 $19.95 U.S.




Meeting people online is no problem — drop into any online chat room or IRC (Internet Relay Chat) channel at any time of day or night, and you'll find people galore. The tough part is trying to figure out what people are really like behind their screens. What *Romancing the Net* attempts to do, through true stories and psychological profiling, is to guide readers through the roadblocks and hazards of trying to find love online, and help them filter through the thousands of chat partners to find the perfect soul mate.

While you'll find that the rules of love online outlined in the book aren't that different from those for love in the "real" world, the book is valuable because it offers advice on how to prepare to meet online lovers face to face and what to expect. It also covers the typical actions and reactions you should expect when you start communicating intimately with someone via e-mail or chat.

All in all, if you're trying to find Mr. or Mrs. Right online, this may be a good book to read to get some tips. It's also refreshing to see a book about online relationships that's not just an excuse to publish examples of hot sex chats. ■

# Off the Wire

by Reed Kirk Rahlmann

## Humor Sites on the Net

Judging from most of the humor found on the Internet, there are a lot of frustrated comedy writers out on the wires. Deservedly so, in many cases. Here's a list of sites worth a hit for a probable laugh, and some that must be avoided all costs. I searched them out so you wouldn't have to, and, trust me on this, any time you spend there, you'll wish you had back. I sure as hell do.

### Mad Martian

**http://www.efn.org/~shkolnik**

Self-proclaimed museum of modern madness. Recent offerings include a rare hearse for sale, and a Sisyphian "Click the Mouse" game. Site contains some good graphics, but is thin on the yucks.

### Funny Bone

**http://www.indirect.com/www/nunley/bone**

A collection of jokes falling into different topics — religion, lawyers, lightbulbs, bars, religion, etc. Not much more than an online joke book, but the material is solid. It was also the first time I laughed out loud after crawling a long, long time in search of anything funny.

### Crossing the Line

**http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~jtsF93/**

A page devoted to twisted images, strange animations, and subversive humor. Graphically superior to every site cruised for this piece, and easily better than 99 percent of other online graphics. Check out the Whack Room, which currently features "Uses for a Human Head" (i.e., bookend, hood ornament) and an animated kickline of frog-like monsters. Especially fun if you have a fast modem.

### Humor Site of the Every Other Day

**http://bird.taponline.com/yourmom/HSotEOD.html**

Obviously, a hit-and-miss kind of deal. I'm just glad someone had the imagination to do a variation on the every day/week routine.

### Fakemail

**http://www.netcreations.com/fakemail/**

A site to send e-mail to anyone from anyone, including to and from nonexistent addresses. Of course, what was designed for sending crank letters to bosses without reprisal has now fallen into the hands of cretins, who send hate mail and other pinheaded e-pistles without having to reveal their cowardly selves. Fakemail has stirred up a lot of trouble, which is always refreshing and fun to read about.

### Kilroy Moot's Devotronic Bandbox

**http://ict.org/~kanis/band/index.shtml**

Do you have everything for a band, including groupies and an attitude, but no name? No problem. This site will create one for you. Pick a style (Folk, Alternative, Heavy Metal), and randomly selected words and phrases are combined for that catchy group moniker. Sample spins produced "Majestic Druids" and "Free Cosmos" for New Age, and "Virginal Reich" for Heavy Metal.

### Toxic Custard Workshop Files

**http://www.forthnet.gr/humour/tcwf/ToxicCustard.html**

Usually clever social commentary and satire from Daniel Bowen, a resident of Melbourne, Australia who has a lot on his mind. Areas to visit include "The Toxic Custarpeida," with entries ranging from Aadvark and Debussy to Zanthoxylum. There's also the "Custard Gallery," consisting of cartoons and strange items from actual life. Just the name makes it worth a look.

### The Deadpool

**http://www.pitt.edu/~jwast8/Deadpool.html**

Morbid fun to be had guessing which celebrities will be pushing up daisies by the year's end, and earning points for correct corpses. History, rules, and scoring of current players give you enough information to start your own contest. Sick, you say? At least the players aren't in the funeral industry, Bub.

## The Atomic Cafe

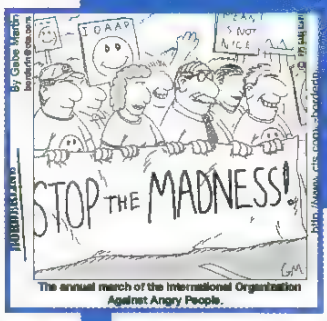
**http://www.sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca/current/atomic/**

A bi-weekly netzine of fun facts and bizarre truths. Did you know Zeppo Marx was an inventor in WWII? Or that Disneyland once had dress code police to prevent long-haired men from entering the park. Or that some poor armored car guard was killed by quarters? Neither did I, but now I have something to talk about at the next party. This is definitely worth a look every fortnight.

## The Borderline Cartoon Netzine

**http://www.cts.com/~borderln/**

A collection of more than 250 cartoons by Gabe Martin. He hits the mark about a quarter of the time, which, for a daily feature, is pretty good. Nothing overly clever here, but I'll bet many of these drawings are downloaded at the office and posted on the bulletin board, enhanced with employees' names and little arrows pointing to the characters.




## Adlib

**http://www.slip.net/~ddumanis/adlib.html**

San Francisco adman Dave Dumanis reviews and rates the latest commercials with wit and insight, which much of his chosen subject matter lacks.

## Gregory Adkin's Interactive Mutating Cyberspace Slideshow

**http://utkvx1.utk.edu/~adkins/slides.html**

Cheap revenge on people who Greg and Greg's friends don't like for various offenses, such as being a jerk or biting the testicles off a sheep (I swear that's what it said). Pictures of victims obtained without their consent are grotesquely altered with huge teeth or ears and the like. Browsers are free to comment (nothing like humiliation from a total stranger, eh?). There's a wicked cleverness about it, however juvenile. I'll admit it; I laughed.

## Greg Bulmash's Humor Page

**http://www.earthlink.net/~gregoire**

Mr. Bulmash's current offerings include articles on dating service scams and educational television. He's a funny writer with obvious brains, but two features makes this site stand above much of the pack: Bulmash will pay real cash money ($1) if he uses your material, and his links are not limited to other humor sites, but include software, search engines, writing interests.

## Things To Do in an Elevator

**http://www.misty.com/laughweb/canonical.lists/things.to.do.in.an.elevator.html**

**A list of annoying and fun activities to make the ride a surreal experience for you and fellow vertical travelers. A must if you migrate by elevator at least once a day. There's an interactive element: You get to rate the humor value of each entry.**

## Sadi: Rainbow Humor Page

**http://www.columbia.edu/~sss31/humor.html**

Lots of stuff, lots of links, lots to click through, mostly written or compiled by people with too much time on their hands. Sample: a picture of "The Simpsons" (the cartoons, not O.J.'s family) made out of punctuation marks. Somewhere, there's probably a nugget of gold in the mountain of silt, but who has zillion hours to find it? If you do, you really need to get out more.

## Internet Squeegee Guy

**http://www.website1.com/squeegee**

He offers to clean the inside of your screen. You have the option to give him change or shove him away. Total hits are shown for your selection. Not a big belly laugh, but a nice piece of conceptual humor.

## Want to Do Your Own Humor-on-the-Net Search?

**Yahoo-Entertainment: Humor, Jokes, Fun**

**http://www.yahoo.com/text/entertainment/humor_jokes_and_fun/**

The best index with the best links. The one address you need to find anything even remotely worth a laugh on the Internet. Miss this and you will wander in barren, unfunny wastelands. ■

# the net next month

## Web Site Reviews:
## 375 Web sites reviewed and rated!

# The Basics and Beyond...

### The Basics:

**Get Online Fast:** Read this before you buy that net-ready computer

**Net Starter Kit:**
Everything you need to know about:
- Choosing among commercial online services and Internet Service Providers
- Browsing the Web
- Finding the helper applications to simplify and enrich your net experience
- Searching the net

### PLUS:
- The first 10 sites you'll want to visit on the Web
- A Web resource list

### And Beyond:

**Top 10 Things To Do Once You're Online:**

- Make the news come to you each day
- Get active in the Presidential election
- Network with others in your profession or hobby area
- Play games
- Listen to music
- Do your taxes
- Gamble on the stock market
- Win contests
- Plan your summer vacation
- Buy CDs
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## Bizarre Site O' The Month

http://www.nj.com/yucky/roaches/index.html

# COCKROACH WORLD
## THE YUCKIEST SITE ON THE INTERNET

by Crystal Waters

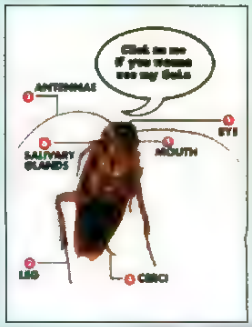
Every time I look at this site, I start getting the paranoid itchies. I know it's because I lived in New York City for five years and had to share my cozy living space with these little buggers — and yes, they do occasionally like to cuddle up to warm human bodies, as I've found out the hard way. Well, now that I'm far away from all that, here comes Liberty Science Center's "Bug Lady," Dr. Betty Faber, hosting the self-proclaimed "Yuckiest Site on the Internet," Cockroach World. Dr. Faber is LSC's staff scientist and entomologist, and "has studied the complexities of cockroaches and other curious creatures for many years." She's appeared on numerous popular talk shows, and now we can explore her subjects 24 hours a day.

**Like it or not, these durable little suckers are here to stay. So set another plate on the table, *we've got company!***

Like I really need to know that there are more than 5,000 species of cockroaches in the world, that their "kidneys look like a bunch of writhing snakes," and that dried and powdered Oriental cockroaches make a "dandy diuretic." Well, despite my repulsion and compulsive scratching, I'm fascinated with this site. As part of the Liberty Science Center located in Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ, Cockroach World is not only bizarre, it's a wealth of facts, fictions, photos, and fun. Yes, cockroach *fun*.

I've downloaded every QuickTime movie showing roaches hissing and crawling, and each sound byte of Betty's bug facts (such as a description of that white gunky stuff that comes out of a roach when you step on it). I played through the Around the World game, in which a number of roaches are described, and visitors have to guess which part of the world each roach is from. (Winners, or anyone who goes through the whole game, get a $3-off coupon to visit the Liberty Science Center). There's a section dedicated to describing cockroach innards and outtards; don't miss the sound file in which Bug Lady describes cockroach brains. And yes, there's even a well-detailed area on how to trap, keep, and care for pet cockroaches — and keep a detailed entomology journal of their growth.

One of my favorite sections of the site is Tall Tales. Basically a messaging area, Tall Tales invites visitors to the site to tell their real and imagined cockroach stories for the rest of the world to comment on or supplement as they see fit. Warning: some are pretty stupid and/or banal, proof that if you give people free rein to write what they want, and they'll do it. Among the better ones: "Once I sublet a guy's apartment in a city which shall remain nameless... I spent a lot of time cleaning it up but kept finding scurrying cockroaches every day. Finally, one morning I put a slice of bread in the toaster oven — and when I turned it on, hundreds of roaches ran for cover! Then they had the nerve to evict me for having a cat."




**Respect and knowledge are key to successful integration of our species.**

Of course, there are a few things that I know about roaches that I didn't find mentioned in this incredibly detailed site. For example, nowhere did it state that roach poop looks just like coffee grounds (although it did mention that if you ground up a roach with some coffee beans, you get French Roach. Ouch.).

I also couldn't find any support for my theory about California versus New York cockroaches. Luckily, there's an "ask Betty" form I was able to take advantage of. While answers to questions are not guaranteed, The Bug Lady herself wrote back to me the next day (*see below*). While the site is seemingly very pro-roach, amid its many splendors is, thankfully, a well-detailed guide on how to successfully get rid of roaches. All you have to do is rid your home of food, water, warmth, and shelter.

Now all I need to find is a cure for paranoid itchies. ■

**To: The Bug Lady**
**From: crystal@thenet-usa.com**

Dear Betty,

Since I moved from New York to San Francisco, I've been able to observe that California cockroaches seem to move much slower than New York cockroaches, even though they seem to be the same kind. Do you agree with my assessment that they are simply just more laid back, just like the human populace?

*Yours,*
*Crystal Waters*

**Dr. Betty Faber, also known as "Bug Lady," has cockroaches — and tarantulas — eating out of the palm of her hand.**

David A. Wagner

To: crystal@thenet-usa.com
From: The Bug Lady
Dear Crystal,

I am not sure to what extent cockroaches pick up on human behavior, even California cockroaches. The speed with which an individual kind of cockroach moves usually has more to do with the ambient temperature rather than the ambient vibes given out by various sentient creatures in the area. You may be seeing the same kinds of cockroaches that you saw in New York, but San Francisco does have other varieties which may move more slowly. It is not impossible that a more relaxed lifestyle would allow one to observe cockroaches with a very different mindset.

*— bettybug*

# ALT. NET. HUMOR

## Six More Weeks of Winter

# THE SEARCH FOR THE CURE

by Crystal Waters

Yeah, I know it's Valentine's season and our dreams are supposed to be filled with visions of sugar plums and Prince Charmings. Well, that's all well and good, and I'll accept roses if I get them, but enjoying myself and feeling romantically inclined is the last thing on my mind. If you want my undying love and affection, bring me NyQuil or TheraFlu. And the only thing I have surrounding my heart at the moment is VapoRub. Excuse me while I sneeze.

It's not that I'm a romance or love cynic, mind you. It's just that having a raging head and chest cold makes the idea of exchanging bodily fluids a pretty disgusting thought at the moment. Call me bitter, call me snotty, call me a doctor, please.

Yet somehow, through this, I always manage to hack my way online. (I have to, right? I mean, I'm supposed to be writing a humor column.) I originally had this idea for a love advice sort of column. You know — where to find a Valentine online (a Lycos search, **http://www.lycos.com/**, on "romance" comes up with more than 4,500 links) and how to buy your Valentines presents even though security is questionable (**http://www.800flowers.com/**, just in case). Instead, I'm on a quest for the definitive cure for the common cold. I figure that if there's a how-to-build-a-hydrogen-bomb plan out there (**http://www.mtsu.edu/~spth0002/bomb.html**), then there's bound to be something online that will clear my sinuses.

A search on Lycos using the keywords "cure," "common," and "cold" brought me a bunch of articles, such as "The Common Cold: Relief But No Cure" (**http://www.hoptechno.com/book64.htm**), and "The 'Common' Cold: So Named Because We All Seem To Get It" (**ftp://medhlp.netusa.net/library/diseases/COLD.TXT**). They all had about as much information as I could find on the back of my Contac box. Basically, I've got to suffer along with the rest of the snifflers. But hey, what's this? "The Common Cold ...Beat It Before It Beats You..." (**http://www.apollo.co.uk/a/common_cold/**). Now, this sounds like something I can use. "Recognize [the] early warning signals and implement my simple, effective technique and you will beat it before it beats you. Send only the dollar amount it is worth to you to possess this knowledge..." What?!? Besides seeming like a crock, this person is counting on someone of my limited tolerance of sickness to come up with a net worth for a health secret that probably is along the same lines as, "Take some Demerol, and then you won't notice that you have a cold."

HealthTrek, a natural health care distributor, not only sells lots of homeopathic pills and stuff, it also gives some suggestions for home healing (**http://www.healthtrek.com/icold.htm**). Doesn't this sound comfy? "Fever Bath: Mix 1/4 cup of each of the following, marigold, thyme, lavender buds, pennyroyal, elder flowers, and mugwort. Soak in one quart of water. Bring to a boil, cover pot, and simmer for 10-20 minutes. Strain and pour liquid in warm bath water. Take relaxing bath of at least 20 minutes. Wrap remaining solids in washcloth and rub over body." They forget to mention that leftover bath water can be used to marinate a pot roast.

While in the throes of passion, don't forget to celebrate Groundhog Day.

I think I've got to go back to the holiday theme. Instead of Valentines, let's celebrate Groundhog Day. Skipping past reviews of the classic movie of the same name, I stumbled across the Groundhog Day Celebration Homepage (**http://www.csh.rit.edu/~jones/ghd.html**), which sings the praises of "the" groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil (who, ironically, happens to be the other star in the movie). If you happen to be in Punxsutawney, PA this holiday season, watch for Phil at Gobbler's Knob. I'm not going to make it.

So, I'm afraid the only relationship advice I can come up with in this state of health is that the way to your lover's heart this season may be through a nose catheter. Have a drip-free day. ■

## How To Write a Valentine

Don't know how to write a creative valentine to your love? Drop on over to The Cyrano Server at **http://www.nando.net/toys/cyrano.html**. Just like the storybook character for which it was named, the Cyrano Server puts together letters for your beloved. You can cut and paste them into your e-mail app and send them away. Fill out the form and choose from steamy, indecisive, surreal, desperate, intellectual, poetic, or regretful styles. And yes, Cyrano will also help you dump your partner gracefully — or not so gracefully.

Cyrano will help bring the poet out in you.

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My pumpkin pie recipe. It was passed down by Great Aunt Emily. 67 Thanksgivings and nary a slice left.

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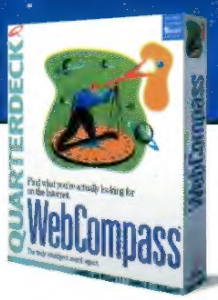


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